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Lebanon complains to truce committee

BEIRUT (AFP) — Lebanon has lodged a complaint with the international committee monitoring a ceasefire in southern Lebanon over an Israeli attack on the area, a government official said Friday. Lebanon has addressed the complaint to the Nicosia-based head of the monitoring committee, Jean-Michel Gassiot, to "denounce the bombardment on Thursday of the two villages of Barasheet and Shaqra," the official said. "This bombardment, which damaged three houses, constitutes a violation of the April 26 agreement," which ended Israel's offensive against Hizbullah guerrillas which left more than 170 Lebanese dead. Two Lebanese civilians were slightly wounded in the Israeli shelling Barasheet at the edge of Israel's self-declared "security zone."

Jordan Times

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Netanyahu is willing to accept demilitarised Palestinian state — aide

'Change of mind' seen signal to Arafat that he could get something from negotiations as Washington sends Ross on resumed mission

Arafat due here today for talks with King Hussein

PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT Yasser Arafat is due here today (Saturday) for talks with His Majesty King Hussein on ways to restart the stalled Middle East peace process, Jordan Television said.

Mr. Arafat returned to Gaza City on Friday after winding up a European tour and making a brief stopover in Cairo to meet Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

On Thursday, he met Pope John Paul II in Rome.

At the sessions held this week, the sessions lasted no more than one hour each.

Israeli leader Yasser Arafat complained Friday that Israel was not serious about the negotiations, countering charges by Mr. Netanyahu that the Palestinians were holding up a deal.

Mr. Arafat said that after he had agreed with Mr. Netanyahu last weekend that three rounds of negoti-

ations be held this week, the sessions lasted no more than one hour each.

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Mr. Arafat said that after he had agreed with Mr. Netanyahu last weekend that three rounds of negoti-

Jewish settlements and not withdraw from additional areas of the West Bank land, as promised.

In this context, Friday's remarks by Mr. Netanyahu's top policy adviser David Bar-Ilan on Palestinian statehood were apparently intended to restore some trust and signal the Palestinians that they would have something to gain from negotiating in good faith.

Mr. Bar-Ilan said the Netanyahu government may be able to accept a Palestinian state with limited sovereignty. As late as September, Mr. Netanyahu had said he would never accept a Palestinian state.

The facts on the ground are obvious, created by the Oslo (peace) agreements, whether we like them or not. There are certain areas

(Continued on page 7)



Palestinians decorate the official 14-metre Christmas tree at Manger Square in front of the Church of Nativity church in Bethlehem on Friday (Reuters photo)

Iraqi says on TV he spied for CIA

BAGHDAD (AP) — An Iraqi air force officer on Friday told state-run television that he had turned military information over to Iraqi Kurds who were working for the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

The confession by Saad Daham Awad, 32, was broadcast nationwide after the government announced the arrest of a sabotage and espionage ring it alleged worked for the CIA.

The state-run Iraqi news agency said the television showed "a group that betrayed its country and has thrown itself into the arms of the CIA."

In Washington, the CIA refused to comment on the Iraqi report. But State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said: "If anybody believes their reports, they ought to have their heads examined."

He said Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein has a history of lying to his own population.

"This is a well noted and tired propaganda ploy," he said. "There's always got to be a scapegoat for the problems of a corrupt, authoritarian dictatorship. ... What more convenient target than the Central Intelligence Agency. This is laughable propaganda."

Awad, a civil engineer, said he got involved with the Kurds in the northern town of Erbil during drug deals. He said his Kurdish drug partners — whom he identified as Hagar Ali Ahmad and his brother, Hayman — later asked him for information about military security offices.

"They took the information to the Iraq trust," Awad said. The trust then handed it over to a woman he identified only by the name Susan, who he said worked for the CIA out of the Turkish air base at Incirlik.

Earlier, the Iraqi News Agency said that the detained members of the ring "gave full confessions on their activity against Iraq, its people and its leader, President Saddam Hussein."

The agency did not say how many were arrested or give details of their activities.

(Continued on page 7)

ICET meeting concludes

AMMAN (J.T.) — A three-day meeting of the International Council on Education for Teaching (ICET) has concluded here after discussing teacher education and school reform.

The annual world assembly of the ICET was inaugurated by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan.

On Thursday, the ICET delegates were received in audience by His Majesty King Hussein at the Royal Court in the presence of His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh, Minister of Higher Education Abdullah Ensour and Minister of Education Munther Maari.

King Hussein emphasised the need for concentration on the quality of education and teacher ethics. He expressed hope that the meeting would contribute further towards the development of the educational process.

ICET President Nelly Maia and the head of the Qatari delegation to the meeting delivered speeches expressing appreciation of Jordan's support for the ICET meeting in Amman and lauding Jordanian leadership efforts to promote education.

Jordan will provide school and university teachers in various specialisations to the Sultanate of Brunei, according to a memorandum of understanding signed by the two sides Thursday.

The memorandum, which was signed by Dr. Ensour and his Brunei counterpart, was signed by Dr. Ensour and his Brunei counterpart.

(Continued on page 7)

Levy visit to Jordan does little to narrow differences

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordanian-Israeli relations appeared heading towards more strain after a visit here Thursday by Israeli Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister David Levy failed to resolve the differences that have been pushing the two countries apart since shortly after the formation of a Likud-led government in Israel this summer.

An informed source said the meetings which His Majesty King Hussein, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti held with Mr. Levy failed to bridge the gap in the positions of the two countries towards the peace process and means of overcoming the obstacles facing it.

During these meetings, Jordan demanded that Israel implement all the agreements it has signed with the Palestinians and rejected the expansion of settlement as a direct threat not just to the Palestinians but to Jordan's national security and the future of the whole peace process.

Meeting Mr. Levy at the prime ministry, Mr. Kabariti who on Wednesday warned Israel's policies could push the region towards a human disaster that could threaten the whole region, said "the settlements are an illegal issue which contradict the principle of land for peace... they are a direct threat to the peace process."

But during a joint press conference with Minister of Information Marwan Muasher, Mr. Levy gave no indication that Israel was

willing to change any of the policies that Jordan believes are threatening the collapse of the peace process.

On the contrary, the Israeli foreign minister reiterated his country's refusal to halt the expansion of settlements and accused countries condemning the building of the settlements of trying "to isolate" the Jewish state.

Dr. Muasher told the press conference that Jordan believes Israel's settlements policies are "stripping the peace process of its substance" which poses a direct threat to Jordan through reviving the idea of the Jordanian option.

Dr. Muasher was referring to the idea which the Likud government advocated in the early eighties for building a Palestinian state in Jordan and which Jordan

had said was buried forever after Israel recognised the Kingdom's borders and sovereignty in the October 1994 peace treaty.

Taking away the substance from the peace process by Israel's continuation of its settlement policies "will result in the revival of the alternative homeland (for Palestinians in Jordan) in addition to the expulsion (of Palestinians) which pose a direct threat to Jordan and help create negative conditions as the ones we live today under which progress in the peace process cannot be made," Dr. Muasher said.

But Mr. Levy rejected as "unfounded" fears that Israel is threatening the security of Jordan.

"We did not sign a peace treaty with Jordan to create security problems for Jordan. I represent the govern-

ment and the national consensus when I say we want to cooperate with Jordan in all fields, an obviously irritated Levy told journalists.

Mr. Levy, who urged the restoration of the atmosphere of trust in the region, said Israel remains committed to the peace process and will implement all agreements it has entered. But Dr. Muasher insisted that Jordan wants to see promises implemented on the ground.

"I think the only way to restore confidence is to see promises implemented on the ground," said Dr. Muasher, who stressed that the whole region was awaiting Israel's implementation of the agreements it has signed with the Palestinians.

A defiant Levy accused countries protesting the expansion of settlement of

"exaggerating the issue beyond its natural proportions...to pressure (Israel) to make concessions."

But "that is not the method that will work," said Mr. Levy, who added that nothing in the Oslo accords mentions halting the settlement.

Mr. Levy said the Israeli government was committed to its electoral programme which promised the expansion of settlements.

"This government was elected with a mandate to advance the policy of settlements and it has acted adequately, with proper caution and courtesy and has not taken any decision to establish any (new) settlements," said Mr. Levy, whose government's decision to give incentives to settlers caused an international outcry.

(Continued on page 7)

Rao quits as party leader; battle for succession starts

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Scandal-tainted former Indian Premier P.V. Narasimha Rao stepped down Friday as chief of Congress (I) Party's parliamentary wing after loyalists turned on him, demanding his resignation.

Senior Congress leader Sharad Pawar, a rival of Mr. Rao, said an election on Monday will name a successor to the former prime minister, who now holds no key position in the 111-year-old Congress.

Mr. Rao, currently on trial in three corruption cases, quit as head of the Congress Parliamentary Party (CPP) after Congress President Sitaram Kesari on Wednesday ordered him to vacate the post by 4:00 p.m. (1030 GMT) Thursday.

The former prime minister was succeeded as party

leader by Mr. Kesari in September, and the loss of the CPP post, traditionally held by party presidents, was the final blow to a political career that spanned a half-century of Congress domination in Indian politics.

Minutes after the resignation of Mr. Rao, who was premier between 1991 and 1996, the Bombay stock exchange capital market index soared, and rivals jostled to fill the vacuum in the top slot of the CPP.

"Now that Rao has resigned creating a vacancy, I am in the race," said Rajesh Pilot, a bitter Rao hater and former internal security minister.

"In the larger interest of healthy inner-party democracy, there should be a contest for the leadership of the CPP," Mr. Pilot said as

reports grew that Mr. Pawar, Mr. Kesari and former Finance Minister Manmohan Singh were also in the race for the job.

Mr. Rao in his resignation letter wrote: "The Congress president has written to me that I should step down. I am accordingly sending you my letter of resignation."

"I request you to convene a meeting of the general body to accept my resignation and enable me to thank the party personally."

Mr. Rao had been fighting a rearguard action to hold on to the post ever since standing down as party president.

Congress spokesman Vithal Gadgil said a general meeting of the 24-member CPP will review Mr. Rao's

(Continued on page 7)

Lima hostage crisis deadlocked as rebels maintain their demand

LIMA (Agencies) — Rebels of the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRT) maintain their demand for the release of their jailed comrades in exchange for the lives of some 400 hostages, according to a caller identifying himself as a member of the group.

"The only solution (to the crisis) is the one we demanded the first day," a caller told Cadena Peruana De Noticias radio by telephone.

If the rebel demand is not met, "we will all die here," the caller said.

"We do not want attacks or assaults on the compound" of the Japanese ambassador's residence seized Tuesday by a 20-member command of the

leftist rebel group, he said.

The Peruvian government, during a cabinet meeting early Friday, "totally rejected" the rebel demand, local radio reported here.

Another message appeared on a back window of the residence Friday, written in Japanese and presumably posted by the hostages. "We are fine, they are planning to release more hostages," it said.

Local media reported earlier Friday that Peru has tentatively decided not to meet rebel demands to free their jailed comrades.

The Red Cross is the main go-between for the rebels and the government, its workers passing through police lines to ferry fruit, bread, ham and cheese to

the rebels and hostages, who reportedly include six Americans.

Former U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, who was defeated by Mr. Fujimori in the 1995 elections, urged the government not to give in to the rebels' demands saying it would set a bad precedent.

"It would encourage other terrorist groups, such as the shining path, to do the same," he said in an interview published in the daily El Comercio.

He noted such a demand for freedom could be made for shining path founder and leader Abimael Guzman, who is serving a life sentence without parole at a navy base in Lima's port of

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(Continued on page 7)

Sabbah accuses Israel of foiling peace process

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — The policies of Israel's government undermine Mideast peace and the security of both Palestinians and Israelis, the top Roman Catholic clergyman in the region said in a Christmas message Friday.

"If truly the Israeli government wants security for its people, it should take the necessary steps, give freedom to the Palestinians to organize their lives, to have a stable economic structure to enjoy their lives," said Michel Sabbah, the Latin patriarch of Jerusalem.

Patriarch Sabbah's comments come at a time of increased tensions between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government and Mr. Arafat's Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

Mr. Netanyahu has angered the Arab World by declaring he would expand Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Israeli planners have also approved the construction of 132 homes for Jews in an Arab neighbourhood in East Jerusalem, the sector where Palestinians hope to establish a future capital.

The Palestinians have demanded that Israel lift its prolonged security closures

that keep most of the two million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza from entering Israel.

"In these days, peace and security are more threatened because of the new line of the (Israeli) government," Patriarch Sabbah, a Palestinian, told a news conference at the Latin Patriarchate in the Christian quarter of Jerusalem's Walled Old City.

"The Israeli authorities should change their visions of peace, should take into consideration that the Palestinian human being is equal in his rights and dignity to the Israeli human being," Patriarch Sabbah said.

He urged Christians, Jews and Muslims to work together to build peace, "especially in these difficult moments when peace seems impossible."

He said Christmas was a time to remember Jesus' message.

"In this Holy Land and this difficult situation in which we are living, we need a saviour in order to put an end to the conflict in which the two peoples are living, the Palestinians and the Israelis, a saviour to bring peace to this land."

U.S. voices opposition to growing Turkey-Iran ties

ANKARA (AFP) — The United States has expressed serious reservations over a growing rapprochement between Turkey and Iran, which Washington accuses of sponsoring terrorism, U.S. diplomats here said Friday.

A U.S. diplomat visited the Turkish foreign ministry Thursday to warn of Washington's concern on the first day of an official four-day visit to Turkey by Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

The U.S. diplomat underlined to the Turkish officials that the U.S. view of Tehran had not changed. The United States has led a campaign to isolate Iran internationally.

Washington still considers Iran dangerous because of its "support to terrorism" and its efforts in the "acquisition of weapons of mass destruction and attempts to undermine the peace process," in the Middle East, a U.S. diplomatic source said.

He quoted U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher as telling a press conference Thursday: "We remain in the process of calling to the attention of our allies the conduct of Iran and urging them not to give financial, material, or military support to Iran."

Turkey, a member of NATO, and the Islamic Republic of Iran said Thursday they wanted to improve bilateral cooperation, particularly in trade and defence



Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani (right) welcomed by Turkish President Suleyman Demirel (left) on his arrival at the start of a four-day visit to Turkey on Thursday (Reuters photo)

matters. There are plans to sign several cooperation accords on Saturday.

In a bid to reassure the U.S., Turkish President Suleyman Demirel said after talks Thursday: "Turkey and Iran are two countries which are aware of their responsibilities. No one should draw false conclusions from their willingness to work together."

During a visit to Tehran in August by Turkey's Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan — his first foreign trip after his June election — the two countries signed a contract worth over \$20 billion for the purchase of Iranian natural gas.

Despite pressure from the United States, Turkey has

refused to cancel the contract citing urgent energy needs.

But the growing rapprochement and plans for a defence accord with Tehran have caused a rift in Turkey's coalition government between Mr. Erbakan's Welfare Party (Refah) and the right-wing True Path Party of Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller.

Defence Minister Turhan Tayan, a member of Mrs. Ciller's party, rejected the idea of defence cooperation with Iran on Thursday. He said cooperation in the defence industry between Iran and Turkey, given their present state, "is not possible in our opinion."

News in Brief

Primakov due in Tehran

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov will pay a two-day official visit to Iran Sunday, the foreign ministry said in a statement quoted by Itar-Tass news agency Friday. Russia and Iran signed a cooperation agreement earlier this month to develop ties in all sectors of industry, and especially oil and gas. Tehran will buy Russian oil equipment worth up to \$800 million, and Iran will be able to pay off its \$600 million debt to Russia in oil over the next four years. Russian Deputy Prime Minister for Foreign Economic Relations Oleg Davydov said.

Ayatollah blasts Internet as 'poison'

TEHRAN (AFP) — An Iranian ayatollah on Friday slammed the Internet as a "poison" which could harm moral values in the Islamic republic, saying access should be restricted to scientists. "Unfortunately, some officials have also been swept away by the phenomenon and do not realise that the Internet is poisoning the people," Ayatollah Ahmad Janati said at the weekly prayers in Tehran. "Use of the Internet should be limited to scientists and researchers," said Mr. Janati, leader of the ultra-conservative wing of the Shiite Muslim clergy in Iran. "We are not against the scientific use of the Internet but we must be careful because it is even more dangerous than poison, harming the opinions and morals" of the Iranian people, he said.

Saudi beheaded for murder

RIYADH (AFP) — A Saudi convicted of murder was beheaded on Friday, raising to 67 the number of executions announced this year in the kingdom, the interior ministry said. Mishal Ben Shuwail Al Utaibi shot dead a fellow Saudi, Nashi Ben Ghanam Al Utaibi, after a dispute, the ministry said.

Taiwanese minister ends visit to Jordan

AMMAN (J.T.) — Taiwanese Foreign Minister John Chang left Jordan on Friday after a two-day visit billed as a private trip to the Kingdom during which he addressed a university faculty and received an honorary doctorate, sources said.

Officials kept silent over Mr. Chang's visit, which on Thursday drew "strong indignation" from the Chinese government.

Sources confirmed that the Taiwanese minister, who arrived here on Wednesday, addressed a gathering at Yarmouk University.

"He also received a honorary doctorate from the university," said a source travelling with Mr. Chang, who visited Abu Dhabi before coming to Jordan.

"The minister did have other engagements in Jordan, including lunch and dinner meetings, but I am not at liberty to disclose the details," added the source. The source also declined to name Mr. Chang's hosts.

It was not immediately clear whether Mr. Chang headed for home or continued his secrecy-shrouded foreign mission after his stay in Amman.

The source, who accompanied Mr. Chang, said only close aides travelling with the minister knew exactly where he was going.

"It has been a cat-and-mouse game since the minister left Taiwan," said the source, adding "We are being told of the destination at the last minute."

According to the source, Mr. Chang was "most definitely not" headed for Italy from Jordan as was reported in the Taiwanese press.

The Far East Commercial Office, which represents Taiwanese interests in Jordan, was not available for comment.

Officials said there was no formal invitation to Mr. Chang from the Jordanian government.

"If Mr. Chang was indeed in Jordan, then all we can tell you is that he was on a private visit," said an official.

Jordan maintains diplomatic relations with China but has commercial links with Taiwan.

In Beijing, the Chinese Foreign Ministry on Thursday expressed its displeasure over the Taiwanese minister's visit to the UAE and Jordan.

"We have expressed our regrets and our strong

indignation over countries including Jordan for officially receiving Mr. Chang," foreign ministry spokesman Shen Guofang was quoted as telling a told a regular news conference.

"We hope that all countries concerned hold strictly to the principle of one China, and that they be vigilant regarding Taiwanese initiatives aimed at harming relations across the Taiwan Strait," Mr. Shen added.

The Beijing government considers Taiwan a rebel province.

"We hope such instances are not repeated, otherwise it could seriously affect relations between these countries and China," said Mr. Shen.

The spokesman said China had already protested to the countries concerned, and appealed to the world community not to subjugate diplomatic convention on Taiwan to commercial interests.

"The trip by Mr. Chang to Jordan and other countries proves that the Taiwanese authorities lack sincerity when they promise to work for better relations across the strait," Mr. Shen said, accusing the Taipei government of continuing its "separatist activities."

Recognised officially by only 30 countries, mostly small countries clustered in Africa and central America, Taiwan has in recent months stepped up its campaign of "secret diplomacy," with officials visiting states that recognise Beijing as the government of all of China.

The visit to Jordan follows Mr. Chang's trip in September to Indonesia and Malaysia. Last August, Vice President Lien Chan made a "secret visit" to Ukraine.

Earlier this month Mr. Chang hurriedly arranged a trip to South Africa, far the largest and most important country to recognise Taiwan but which had announced that it would switch recognition to China at the end of 1997.

Following that trip, Mr. Chang showed up in Belgium.

"The Taiwan authorities are acting against the wishes of the Chinese people in redoubling their efforts to create 'two Chinas' or 'one China, one Taiwan,' and in trying to harm China's relations with other countries," spokesman Shen asserted.

Dozens arrested after attack on Syrian mini-bus in Beirut

BEIRUT (AFP) — Dozens of people, mostly supporters of Christian opposition parties, have been rounded up since an anti-Syrian attack north of the Lebanese capital, an opposition leader said Friday.

"At least 40 to 50 people were arrested since the attack on the mini-bus," Dory Chamoun, leader of the National Liberal Party (NLP), told AFP.

Unidentified assailants armed with machine-guns on Wednesday fired at a Syrian civilian mini-bus on the road from Beirut to Tripoli, killing its driver and slightly wounding one of his four passengers.

Mr. Chamoun said most of those arrested were supporters of the disbanded Lebanese Forces militia of General Michel Aoun, who headed a military govern-

ment from 1988 to 1990 before being driven into exile in France.

The former LF leader, Samir Geagea, is serving two life sentences for the 1989 killing of a Christian doctor and the 1990 assassination of the former NLP leader, Daay Chamoun (Dory's brother), and his family.

Dory Chamoun said those arrested included his personal bodyguard, Charbel Shami, and one of his party's senior officials, Charles Rustom, who were taken from their homes Wednesday without arrest warrants.

The bodyguard was released on Thursday night. "Shami was hanged by the hands for 10 hours and forced to sit on bare floor, without clothes," said Mr. Chamoun. "We have start-

ed legal proceedings and we also intend to denounce such inadmissible treatment to human rights groups."

"Shami was mostly interrogated over my activities, if I visit Israel, who accompanies me when I travel abroad, especially to France," he said. "It seems to be an effort to make me

be an effort to make me

Egypt's first lady ready to fight female circumcision

CAIRO (AFP) — President Hosni Mubarak's wife said in an interview Friday that she was willing to play a personal role in a campaign to combat female circumcision in Egypt.

"There is in Egypt today an awareness campaign to put an end to this practice... I am determined to go to rural areas to take part in this campaign," Suzanne Mubarak told the Arabic-language daily Al Hayat.

The Health Ministry ear-

lier this year banned the practice of female circumcision in public hospitals. The clitoris and sometimes the labia are removed in the procedure, a common practice in Africa.

According to the Health Ministry, the practice dates back thousands of years in Egypt and daughters of 98 per cent of rural families and 70 per cent of urban families undergo the operation.

It has caused the death by bleeding of many girls.

A study published in August by a government daily, following the death of a 14-year-old girl during a circumcision, showed 37 per cent of Egyptians support the ban while 32 are opposed to it.

"It is a very sensitive issue and dealing with it needs precision, patience and time," Mrs. Mubarak said. She admitted she had not been "aware of the depth of this problem."

"The film broadcast by CNN (in 1994) certainly highlighted the problem,"

said the president's wife.

Militants have sued an Egyptian journalist involved in the filming by the U.S. television network as well as Health Minister Ismail Sallam for ordering the ban in public hospitals.

Egypt's highest Sunni Muslim authority, Sheikh Mohammad Sayyid Tantawi of Al Azhar, has said Islam does not advocate female circumcision and that doctors should decide whether it is necessary to perform the opera-

tion.

The Egyptian organisation of human rights has estimated that nearly 3,600 girls, both Muslims and Coptic Christian, undergo excisions each day in Egypt.

Suzanne Mubarak founded an association to help develop the status of women in rural areas before her husband was elected president in 1981. She is also active in the fight against illiteracy, having set up libraries across Egypt.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 77311-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:05 The Adventures of Mickey and Donald
14:30 Circus and Safety at Work
15:00 Doc. — La France Aux Mille Villages
15:30 Fete des Bebes
16:00 Sports — Gillette
16:30 Chris Cross
17:00 News Flash
17:02 Futures
17:15 Drama — Blue Heelers
18:00 Series — Jack
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 Magazine
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Comedy — Something Wilder
20:00 Doc. — Superstars of Action
20:30 Prism
21:10 Lois and Clarke
22:00 News in English
22:25 Best Seller — Devices and Desires
23:15 Feature Film: "Hot Spot"

PRAYER TIMES

05:04 Fajr
06:26 (Sunrise) Duha
11:33 Dhuhur
14:17 Asr
16:40 Maghreb
18:03 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweithel, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Church of the Annunciation

Agaba 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661656.
Terrasanta Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 652826.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Amman International Church Tel. 827126
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Sunny to partly cloudy weather conditions will prevail with winds variable to southeasterly moderate. In Agaba, winds will be northerly moderate and socalm.

Min./Max. temp.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

AMMAN:
Dr. Bassam Karadshah 759200
Dr. Salman Daboubi 776751
Dr. Khalid M'addi 661144
Dr. Ramzi Mazzawi 894788
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asena pharmacy 637055
Nairooshi pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632
IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Qanu 281484
Al Quds pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Samir Al Jawzi 989601
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency

199
Rescue Police 192 621111
637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Husseini Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 644281/6
Akkleh Maternity, J. Amn 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity

Malhas, J. Amman

642362
636140
Shmeisani
607071
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Musasher Hospital 6672279
The Islamic, Abdali 66612637
Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641646
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 771101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 60224050
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)905660
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikam Modern Hospital (09)990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272775
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

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Royal Jordanian (RJ) information

department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights is obtained on telephone (08) 52700 or (08) 523250.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
08:35 Damascus (RJ)
09:45 New Delhi (RJ)
09:55 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
10:05 Beirut (RJ)
10:30 Colombo (RJ)
12:45 Frankfurt (add) (RJ)
14:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
15:50 Cairo (add) (RJ)
15:55 London (RJ)
16:00 Jeddah (RJ)
16:20 Cairo (RJ)
17:10 Frankfurt (add) (RJ)
19:25 Berlin (add) (RJ)
19:35 Vienna (RJ)
22:25 Salalah (add) (RJ)
01:50 Madrid (add) (RJ)
05:35 Bangkok (RJ)

Other Flights

12:40 Muscat, Abu Dhabi (GF)
15:05 Vienna (OS)
18:15 Dubai, Damascus (EK)
21:00 Paris, Damascus (AF)
22:20 Larnaca (CY)
22:25 Beirut (ME)
22:35 Cairo (MS)
23:40 Amsterdam, Beirut (KL)
23:50 London (KU)
01:00 London, Damascus (BA)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:20 Beirut (RJ)
07:15 Frankfurt (add) (RJ)
10:00 Berlin (RJ)
11:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
11:05 Vienna (RJ)
11:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:50 Paris, Brussels (RJ)
12:00 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:00 Jakarta (add) (RJ)
12:00 Cairo (add) (RJ)
12:15 London (RJ)
13:45 Salalah (add) (RJ)
20:00 Kuala Lumpur (add) (RJ)
20:00 Bombay (RJ)
20:05 Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
20:15 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
20:20 Larnaca (RJ)
21:00 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
03:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
03:50 Madrid (add) (RJ)

Other Flights

00:15 Damascus, Amsterdam (KL)
03:00 Beirut, Athens (OA)
07:00 Beirut (ME)
13:30 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
15:50 Vienna (OS)
19:15 Dubai (EK)

ROYAL WINGS (RW) Flights

09:20 Agaba (RW)
18:55 Sharm Al Sheikh (RW)

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Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

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Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Apple 700/500
Banana 550/550
Banana (imported) 350/600
Cabbage 70/50
Carrot 300/150
Cauliflower 130/100
Cucumber (large) 120/80
Cucumber (small) 270/180
Eggplant 150/80
Garlic 850/600
Grape fruit 150/100
Lemon 400/300
Marrow (large) 80/40
Marrow (small) 140/100
Onion (green) 160/100
Onion (dry) 170/80
Orange 580/400
Pepper (hot) 240/150
Pepper (sweet) 240/150
Potato 270/160
Spinach 140/100
String Bean 380/300
Tomato 150/120

December 21, 1996
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Home News

Jordan Times, Saturday, December 21, 1996

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'NAF to expand social services'

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Social Development Hamad Abu Jamous Friday announced that the National Aid Fund (NAF) board has decided to expand services in 1997 to include greater number of people in its aid programmes.

He said that the programme was adopted by the fund in the context of a decision made by the Council of Ministers last Sunday which allocated JD400 million for a local security package programme to help the indigent.

The NAF will assume a more aggressive role in combating poverty and unemployment by trying to protect destitute groups through helping them open small businesses and through providing vocational training courses, Mr. Abu Jamous said.

Last Sunday, the government decided to allocate JD400 million to the poor stat-

ing that this implementation would be a priority issue.

They also formulated a higher council to coordinate the work of various governmental agencies and draw up clear policies to fight poverty and unemployment.

The government said that the appropriate officials have been instructed to design the social security package and to seek funds for the social safety net project beginning in 1997.

Mr. Abu Jamous said that the NAF, which is affiliated to the Ministry of Social Development, has focused of late on rehabilitating individuals in poor families to help them become self-reliant instead of remaining dependent on the fund.

The minister, who is also board chairman of the fund, said that the fund has created committees in the various governorates to seek

out indigent groups which merit financial aid in order to channel funds and vocational training to them.

The NAF offers soft loans for groups to initiate small businesses after they have been allocated the proper training and has implemented a payment schedule by instalment, Mr. Abu Jamous affirmed.

However, he said, in case such a project fails, the government can exempt beneficiaries from repaying the loan or part of it.

So far, he said, the majority of beneficiaries businesses seem to be succeeding and general payment has been forthcoming.

The minister stated that loans can be allotted only after a special committee has conducted feasibility studies on the potential small businesses.

Sergeant attests to Masri confession

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A prosecution witness, testifying in the case of Mazen Masri, accused of killing his two children in September, Thursday told the court "that the defendant repeatedly confessed, in front of his wife, to killing his two children."

"Mr. Masri told his wife in the Shmeisani Police Station, on Sept. 25, that, out of jealousy, he administered two cyanide pills to his two children to kill them and that he regretted his act," Sergeant Lina Hejazin, 23, said.

Sgt. Hejazin, who was present in the police station with the defendant's wife Hiam Hamoudah, describing the defendant's wife's reaction as follows: "She [Ms. Hamoudah] could not believe what she was hearing and began crying, then asked her husband why he didn't divorce her instead of killing the children."

"Mr. Masri told her that he killed her children as they were more attached to her than they were to him, and that they loved her more than they loved him," Sgt. Hejazin said.

Mr. Masri, 34, is standing trial on two counts of premeditated murder and three counts of attempted murder, charges which have been filed by the criminal prosecutor.

On Sept. 25, he confessed, in front of authorities, to the poisoning and killing his two children, Hanin, nine, and Hani, six, on the morning of Sept. 11, by giving them two cyanide pills he had reportedly purchased during a business trip to Canada.

On the morning of the incident, Sgt. Hejazin said that Mr. Masri told his wife, in the process of giving him a ride to his work, that "he had to return to their apartment as he forgot something."

"During his confession," he told his wife that he

secured two cyanide pills he had hidden in the apartment and issued them to his children, then returned to his wife who was waiting for him," she said.

The two children were found collapsed by their mother in their Abu Oneizah Housing Complex, 30 minutes after returning home from giving her husband a ride to work.

Last month, Mr. Masri retracted his confessions claiming that they were "fabricated" and that he had important issues to disclose "at the appropriate time."

Second Lieutenant Mamdouh Majali, who seized and searched a briefcase which belonged to Mr. Masri on Sept. 25, said that he did not witness any evidence of torture administered to the defendant on that day.

"Mr. Masri accompanied us to his apartment and opened the door with his own key, and I did not notice nor feel that he was subjected to physical or

mental torture," the police officer said.

Ghazwa Malhas, information director at the National Information Centre at the Higher Council (NIC) of Science and Technology, where Mr. Masri was employed, testified in court that she had travelled with the suspect on a business trip to Canada on June 14.

When asked by Defence Attorney Ahmad Najdawi whether the defendant's work at the NIC also involved Internet installation or programming, Ms. Malhas confirmed that the suspect's work at the centre was unrelated to the Internet.

"I am not his direct supervisor, but I know that [Mr. Masri] is an engineer in installing communication networks and that this has nothing to do with Internet installation or programming," Ms. Malhas said.

The defence is trying to prove that the children's death was related to the suspect's work at the NIC,

which involves Internet installation and programming.

At the end of the two-hour court session, Prosecutor Ali Abu Hjeleh rested his case and presented the court with the prosecution file, thus opening the way for the defence to present their evidence and witnesses in court.

Attorney Najdawi asked the court to give him enough time to call on witnesses to testify in the case.

When asked by the Jordan Times whether Mr. Masri will take the witness stand, he said that he had not decided yet.

"First I want to meet with my client in prison, then we will decide whether he will testify or not," Mr. Najdawi said.

The court presided over by Judges Abdul Ruhman Tawfiq, Ismael Hmouz and Miftah Mubaidin set Dec. 31 to start hearing defence witnesses.

Experts issue waste water treatment recommendations

AMMAN (Petra) — Participants in a one-day meeting, regarding the Kingdom's 14 waste-water treatment plants, Friday issued a set of recommendations calling for the expansion of existing plants' facilities as well as the construction of additional plants in light of population increases and rising rates of water consumption.

The meeting, which was organised by the Jordan Environment Society (JES) and attended by representatives of government departments, universities, non-governmental organisations and other affiliated groups, reviewed the present function of waste-water treat-

ment plants, public health safety measures and environmental protection as well as recycling treated water for agricultural purposes.

The issued recommendations related concern that treated water conform to set specifications so that it might be safely utilised for agricultural purposes.

They called for training technical cadres to work in these plants as well as for a sanitation strategy to spread awareness among farmers and the public on the safe usage of treated water.

The participants requested that government institutions conduct studies on

existing water treatment plant operations and urged officials not to restrict their study to the Khirbet Al Samara plant, the largest in the Kingdom.

They urged official and non-governmental organisations concerned with environmental protection to coordinate efforts towards safeguarding the country from environmental hazards.

A total of six reports, reviewed during three sessions, were presented by specialists affiliated with the ministries of water and irrigation, and health, the Royal Scientific Society and the Civil Defence Department.

Harpist to perform at RCC

AMMAN (J.T.) — As a distinguished finale for the 1996 music displays, the National Music Conservatory (Noor Al Hussein Foundation and Instituto Cervantes), in cooperation with Sireco-Madrid, will organise an evening of harp music as performed by the well-known Spanish harpist, Nuria Llopis Arney, according to a conservatory statement.

Currently holding the position of harp player in the National Orchestra of Spain, Nuria Llopis Arney is a pioneer in the study and interpretation of historical music, the statement said.

Ms. Arney gave several recitals as a soloist and in ensembles. She participated in the First Harp Symposium organised by the Scuola Cantorum de Basilica, gave master classes at the Scuola Civica de Milan, was invited to the IV World Congress of Harp in Paris, performed numerous concerts in Germany participating in the Internationales Harfenfestival 1991 and in the Internationales Musikinstrumentenbau-Symposium (Blankenburg).

She achieved her musical studies at the Royal Music Conservatory of Madrid, where she obtained the title of Higher Professor of Harp combining these studies with those achieved at the Complutense University of the same city at the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts.

The concert's programme will feature numerous pieces written especially for harp. The evening will be held on Sunday, December 22, 1996 at the Royal Cultural Centre.

ESCWA deems role revision a necessary move in light of 'rapidly changing regional world order'

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) must revise its role and improve its performance for it to cope with a rapidly changing regional world order, a number of Arab intellectuals and scholars affirmed Wednesday.

In a closed meeting, the participants reviewed commission activities and discussed the reforms introduced to meet the needs of its member states, over the past three years.

They said that ESCWA should be prepared for regional developments which could potentially affect operations.

Executive Director of ESCWA Hazem Biblawi admonished all regional and international organisations to monitor developments in their areas of operation, in order to benefit from the opportunities provided by these developments.

In a press conference Thursday, one of the partic-

ipants, Said Najjar from Egypt, described the conference as discussing different international and regional changes affecting ESCWA's work.

Globalisation and regional groupings in Europe, Asia and North America, were among the topics discussed, Mr. Najjar said.

He said that political developments in the Middle East and impediments to peace in the region, potentially leading to new regional variables could also affect the work of ESCWA.

Former Minister of Information Ibrahim Izzeddin, who pointed out that ESCWA does not address political issues, affirmed that it does, however, play an important role in both economic and social affairs.

Dr. Izzeddin added that most of ESCWA member countries are undertaking economic reforms which could translate into negative social effects and urged ESCWA to present solutions and recommendations to these countries.

Former Minister of Infor-

mation and Senator Laila Sharaf said that ESCWA was successful in its social role especially as pertaining to women and urban development.

However, "the result of this success was slow and not immediately felt," Senator Sharaf said.

Dr. Biblawi said that although ESCWA was the first regional committee to adopt several structural and administrative reforms to improve its performance, it is still unknown to many intellectuals in the region as it is to some United Nations authorities.

"All this goes back to the weak role ESCWA played in clarifying the nature of its activities," Dr. Biblawi said, adding that since its establishment ESCWA has also been impacted by conflicts and wars which have forced operational moves from one country to another.

In light of regional and international events, he deemed important that ESCWA coordinate policies of member countries; a move which, he added,

would improve regional cooperation and economic integration.

ESCWA, Dr. Biblawi said, should also be alert to potential economic and social problems before they actually take place.

"ESCWA should be a main source of statistics and economic and social information related to the region," he added.

It is important for ESCWA to monitor international developments and their economic and social impact on countries of the region and to coordinate member countries' positions to these developments, Dr. Biblawi maintained.

He told reporters that the meeting will assist ESCWA in programme preparations for 1998 and 1999, adding that participants' input will be considered priority.

ESCWA's member countries include Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, Bahrain, Egypt, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Yemen.

NEWS IN BRIEF

JWA begins seminar today

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordanian politicians and intellectuals today begin a six-day seminar, organised by the Jordanian Writers Association to discuss national and pan-Arab issues. The list of items to be discussed includes the Jordanian stance in light of regional developments, political choices, Jordanian-Palestinian relations and whether the country should opt for a state economy or a market economy. Participants include former prime ministers, former ministers, senate members, former university presidents, economists, academics and intellectuals.

ICARDA director general arrives tomorrow

AMMAN (Petra) — Director General of the International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA) Adel Biltaji arrives tomorrow on a three-day visit to Jordan for talks with Minister of Agriculture Mustafa Shneikar and senior agricultural officials regarding scopes of bilateral cooperation in the agricultural field. ICARDA cooperates with Jordanian institutions in carrying out agricultural research projects, including strategic crops projects, developing agricultural systems and supplementary irrigation.

Yemeni delegation to discuss environmental issues

AMMAN (Petra) — A Yemeni delegation representing the Environmental Protection Council arrived here Friday to attend a two-week training workshop on environmental protection, organised by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature. Participants in the workshop, which starts today, will receive training on such issues, as integrated environmental management of wildlife reserves, evaluation of their environmental impact and biodiversity in Jordan, in addition to formulation of national strategies for environmental protection.

British Council reports successes in bridging cultural diversity

By Sacha Baggili
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The results and evident benefits of the activities of the British Council during 1996 reflect the agency's success in developing and expanding its work in Jordan and its success in the pursuit of its traditional objective of promoting bilateral cultural relations between Britain and Jordan, despite the difficulties of major budget cuts over the past two years, David Burton, director of the council, told the Jordan Times recently.

The British Council, Britain's principal agency for cultural relations abroad, is committed to obtaining international respect and long-term friends through educational, technical, scientific and cultural cooperation. Its Jordan branch was established in Amman in 1948.

According to British Council staff here, the council has aimed to promote the use of English. British educational and training goods and ser-

vices, and British books and publishing. It administers British examinations, establishes and develops collaborative partnerships, supports the development of partnerships in science, technology and medicine and aims to present the vitality and excellence of British arts and the diversity of British culture.

Dr. Burton asserted that since his appointment to the British Council in 1994, there has been a dramatic period of restructuring within its administration, and efforts have been concentrated on a strategy of 're-focusing' its activities in order to re-identify the areas of mutual interest to the Jordanian and British governments and specifying sector priorities.

"The work we have undertaken this year, the visits which have been arranged by the council for contact between British and Jordanian officials, and the events which we have hosted, reflect the progress which has been made in revitalising the

role and activities of the British Council after a period of relatively low-key status experienced by the agency in Jordan during the late 1980's and early 1990's," Dr. Burton said.

According to Dr. Burton, some of the most fruitful visits arranged by the British Council to England this year include those made by Minister of Higher Education Abdullah Ensour, Minister of Social Development Hamad Abu Jamous, Minister of Administrative Development Kamal Naser and Minister of Education Munther Masri.

"The outcomes of these visits highlighted the common ground which exists between Jordan and Britain, and the fact that the priorities of the Jordanian leadership comply with those of Britain," he said.

The minister of social development, for example, benefited from discussions with British government officials involved in this field, who were able to make recommendations

according to their experiences in undertaking programmes of reform in public services as well as impart their knowledge regarding the concept of a citizen's charter.

Likewise the visit of the minister of education involved fruitful discussions with British education officials, especially in areas regarding reform of the exam system, and other talks with professors at the University of Cambridge centred on the delivery of British school exams in Jordan.

Despite a reduction in budget of approximately 30% over the past two years, the British Council has managed to establish new English language programmes specifically targeted at young people in recognition of the fact that 50% of the Jordanian population are under 15 years of age.

It has also expanded its library services to cater for this group and updated the library's information services now offering CD ROM and Internet services.

Language courses designed especially to cater for the English language requirements of particular professional groups have recently been established and have proved a great success in 1996.

Although the British Council is historically independent, it has this year worked in very close collaboration with the British embassy.

A workshop aimed at training potential woman candidates for the forthcoming 1997 general elections, organised by the Jordanian National Forum for Woman and which ended Wednesday, was held in cooperation with both the British embassy and the British Council.

The scholarship programme administered by the British Council for Jordanian students wishing to attain a masters degree in Britain has recently been restructured under the name of the Chevening Fellowship Scheme and is funded by the British embassy.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILMS

* Two films entitled "Weihnachten in Gaggernau" and "Nikolaikirche" (German with subtitles in English) at Goethe-Institut, Jabbal Amman at 7:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* "Special show and sale of Christmas crafts at the Jordan Crafts Centre (Alaydi), Jabbal Amman, Second Circle (Tel. 644555), until Dec. 31.
* Christmas special at the Jordan River Designs showroom (hand-made ornaments and decoration), Jabbal Amman, First Circle (Tel. 613081/2), until Dec. 31.
* Works by Spanish painter Clara Amado at Instituto Cervantes, Jabbal Amman until 15 Jan.
* Exhibition of colourful gifts and

crafts designed by Andrea Atalla at the Jordan Design and Trade Centre of Noor Al Hussein Foundation, Wadi Sagra Street (Tel. 699141/2), until Jan. 10.

* Works by several artists entitled "The Artist and the Environment" by several artists at Alia Art Gallery, Jabbal Amman, until Dec. 30.
* Painting exhibition by Hind Nassar at the Jordan Arts and Crafts Centre/Artisana, Jabbal Amman (Tel. 647858), until Jan. 10. Also displaying a regular exhibition of arts and crafts and Christmas items.

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Protesters face Belgrade riot police, block bridge

BELGRADE (Agencies) — Some 40,000 Belgrade students Friday faced a cordon of riot police in a tense city centre stand-off and blocked a bridge to protest against alleged election fraud by ruling Socialists, witnesses said.

The students are taking part in 33 days of protests over alleged vote-rigging which overturned opposition victories in 15 of Serbia's biggest towns, including the capital.

Belgrade student leaders had promised to mobilise their supporters to blockade three bridges over the Sava River Friday with the aim of paralysing Belgrade for 30 minutes.

The students put out a cord between themselves and the police to calm the situation but a crowd of elderly bystanders started protesting and hurling insults against the police, they added.

Meanwhile, the wife of Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic Friday accused the opposition of trying to spark civil war.

"We are hearing in Serbia calls to violence and the type of violence which will

inevitably end in a civil war," Milosevic wrote in her regular column in the bi-monthly magazine Duga.

Serbia's first lady said the Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO), led by Vuk Draskovic and one of the three parties of the opposition Together Coalition, and Mr. Draskovic's wife Danica were the main trouble-makers.

"In such a civil war, which the SPO is stirring up, Serbia would lose too many men and the survivors would have no need ... of renewal," she wrote.

She accused Danica Draskovic of being the "real leader of the SPO" and of "having called on citizens to take up arms since the start of the demonstrations."

She also accused the journalists covering the protests of turning a blind eye to "the terrorism, vandalism, the danger of war, the manipulation of the children and youth."

Her criticisms came on the day an international team of observers was due in Belgrade to examine the Nov. 17 election results.

Serbian authorities also indicated they might con-

sider rerunning the vote in a bid to defuse a month-long crisis.

Opposition leaders and students have rallied daily in their thousands on the streets of the capital since the authorities annulled results in 15 out of 18 districts won by the opposition, including Belgrade.

In Bern, former Spanish Premier Felipe Gonzalez met Friday with Swiss Foreign Minister Flavio Cotti before heading to Belgrade as head of a mission to examine contested election results.

Mr. Gonzalez said he hoped to report initial findings before the end of the year.

Mr. Gonzalez is leading a delegation of the trans-Atlantic Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) delegation to Serbia at the invitation of the Belgrade government.

The team's task is to determine what led to the massive protests against Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic and what are the problems associated with democratic rights, freedom of the press and the minorities issue, Mr. Cotti, who is presi-

dent of the OSCE, told reporters.

Mr. Cotti said the delegation should have access to all the people, documents, institutions and electoral commissions that it needs. He said Mr. Gonzalez and his colleagues would employ "necessary tact and adequate determination."

Mr. Gonzalez said he hoped to be able to submit to Mr. Cotti a report and an update on progress before the end of the year.

"It may be mission impossible, but we must not lose heart and draw any hasty conclusions," he said.

The delegation includes representatives from Canada, Poland, Russia, Switzerland, and the United States, as well as from EU member countries.

Yugoslav Foreign Minister Milan Milutinovic said in Belgrade Thursday that if the OSCE team came up with new facts, the municipal elections could be rescheduled.

However, he made clear that a letter sent to him by Mr. Cotti, current head of the OSCE, did not anticipate that the body's conclusions would be binding on Belgrade.

Italy mourns death of Mastroianni

ROME (AFP) — Italy paid homage Friday to "the world's best-loved Italian" cinema great Marcello Mastroianni, who died of cancer in Paris Thursday at the age of 72.

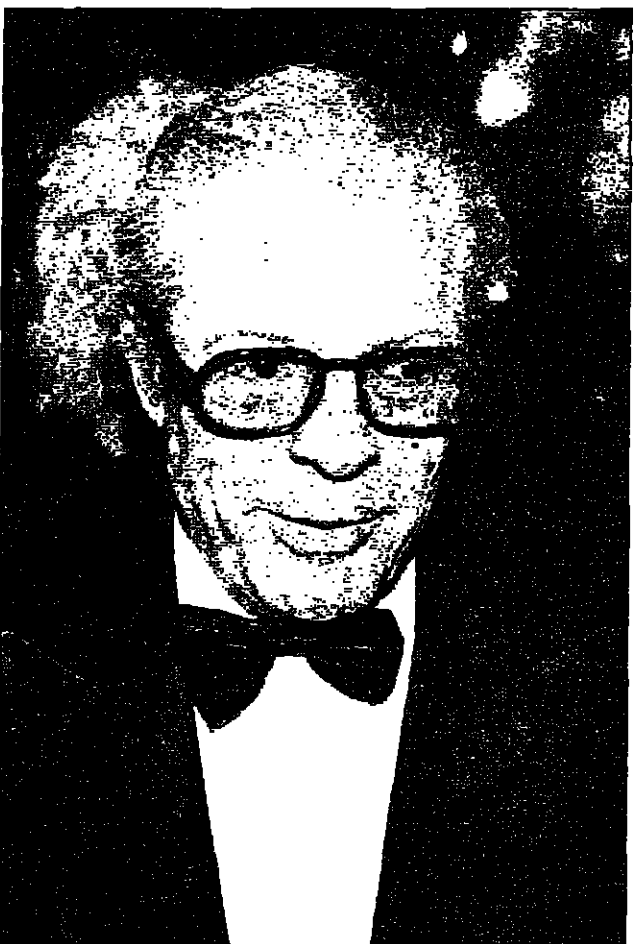
Following the announcement of his death, several radio stations abandoned scheduled programming and threw open their airwaves to listeners, who telephoned in a steady stream of anecdotes and tributes to the actor.

The Italian press dedicated page after page to the career of what they described as the "Italian cinema's mythical actor" and friends, colleagues and relatives painted a portrait of a simple man who always struck a chord with ordinary Italians.

Writer Umberto Eco described in the La Repubblica daily a meeting with Mastroianni at a fancy reception at the U.S. embassy in honour of Nancy Reagan's first visit to Rome.

"All you could see were famous faces," Mr. Eco recalled. "Marcello took me by the arm and, indicating all the important people there with a movement of the head, said: 'If my mother could see me,' as though he was still a lad from the provinces. Whereas he was already very famous and most of the people there were honoured by his presence."

"Mastroianni was always himself, a man like any other, and that's why we loved him for his melancholy tenderness, his ironic humanity and his unassailable lack of confidence."



Italian actor Marcello Mastroianni died in Paris Thursday at the age of 72. Mastroianni is seen arriving moments before the screening of Chilean director Raoul Ruiz's film *Trois Vies Et Une Seule Mort* which was shown in competition at the 49th Cannes Film Festival, on May 19, 1996 (Reuter photo)

said Mr. Eco.

Another great Italian actor, Vittorio Gassman, remembered Mastroianni with great affection, saying that "behind the mask of a man loved by all hid an emotional mystery that will disappear with him."

Meanwhile Flora Mastroianni, who married the actor in 1950 and was his only

lawful wife, described her relationship with the archetypal "Latin lover."

"Every anniversary he sent me roses. He never forgot," she said of Mastroianni, who had numerous affairs and went on to have a child with French actress Catherine Deneuve.

She said that "affection, friendship and respect and

above all an ability to put up with the vices of Italian men" had enabled the two to sustain a relationship.

She added that Mastroianni had never talked to her about his affairs and "even with his last companion, he said she was a friend, nothing more."

Flora added that she learnt about her husband's death when she went shopping in Rome and a shopkeeper told her after hearing about it on the radio.

The Turin newspaper La Stampa said Mastroianni represented a changing Italian type.

"Mastroianni represented a virile Italian beauty made up of a popular and sweet simplicity which never became vulgar through exaggerated luxury."

"He personified the gradual evolution of the Italian male: From adulterous husband to lover of beautiful foreigners to an experiment with open relationships to relations with emancipated women."

Journalist Enzo Biagi, author of a recent biography of Mastroianni and a lifelong friend, told the L'Unita daily that "the actor was never a casanova and that is no doubt why all his women, without exception, sought him out and tried to keep him."

He described him as "a symbol of his generation with all its compromises and hypocrisies, but benefiting from the extenuating circumstances of the terrible events experienced," namely fascism and World War II.

Evita among top nominees for Golden Globe

BEVERLY HILLS, California (R) — The English Patient, Evita, Shine and The People Vs. Larry Flynt topped the list of nominees announced Thursday for the Golden Globe Film Awards.

Pop star Madonna, who plays the title role in Evita, was nominated for best actress in a musical or comedy along with Glenn Close for 101 Dalmations, Frances McDormand for Fargo, Debbie Reynolds for Mother and Barbara Streisand for The Mirror Has Two Faces.

Madonna's nomination came one day after she predicted she would win an Oscar nomination for her role in the screen opera about Eva Peron's rise to power and fame in Argentina.

The wartime drama The English Patient led the field with seven nominations including best dramatic film. Kristin Scott Thomas for best dramatic actress, Ralph Fiennes for best dramatic actor, Juliette Binoche as best dramatic supporting actress and Anthony Minghella for best director and screenplay.

Evita, Shine and The People Vs. Larry Flynt collected five nominations apiece. The biographical musical Evita is up for best musical or comedy along with The Birdcage, Everyone Says I Love You, Fargo and Jerry Maguire.

In addition to The English Patient, the other nominees for best drama are "Breaking The Waves, The People Vs. Larry Flynt, Secrets Lies and Shine."

The Golden Globes, presented by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, will be handed out on Jan. 19 at a star-studded televised ceremony. The Globes are considered an early barometer of how films will fare in the more prestigious academy award nominations, which will be announced on Feb. 11.

In the running for the Golden Globe for best foreign-language film are Belgium's The Eighth Day, the Czech Republic's Kolya, Italy's Luna E L'Altra, Russia's Prisoner

Of The Mountains And Ridicule from France.

Along with Kristin Scott Thomas, other nominees for best dramatic actress were Brenda Blethyn for Secrets Lies, Courtney Love for The People Vs. Larry Flynt, Meryl Streep for Marvin's Room and Emily Watson for Breaking The Waves.

Competing with Fiennes for best dramatic actor are Mel Gibson for Ransom, Woody Harrelson for The People Vs. Larry Flynt, Liam Neeson for Michael Collins and Geoffrey Rush for Shine.

In the comedy/musical category, nominations for best actor went to Antonio Banderas for Evita, Kevin Costner for Tin Cup, Tom Cruise for Jerry Maguire, Nathan Lane for The Birdcage and Eddie Murphy for The Nutty Professor.

Along with Minghella, nominees for best director are Joel Coen for Fargo, Milos Forman for The People Vs. Larry Flynt, Scott Hicks for Shine and Alan Parker for Evita.

Nominees for best supporting actress are Joan Allen for The Crucible, Lauren Bacall for The Mirror Has Two Faces, Juliette Binoche for The English Patient, Barbara Hershey for The Portrait Of A Lady, Marianne Jean-Baptiste for Secrets Lies and Marion Ross for The Evening Star.

In the running for best supporting actor are Cuba Gooding Jr. for Jerry Maguire, Samuel L. Jackson for A Time To Kill, Edward Norton for Primal Fear, Paul Scofield for The Crucible and James Woods for Ghosts Of Mississippi.

The Golden Globes also honour the best in American television. For best drama, the nominees were Chicago Hope, ER, NYPD Blue, Party Of Five and The X-Files.

The contenders for best comedy are 3rd Rock From The Sun, Frasier, Friends, The Larry Sanders Show, Mad About You And Seinfeld.



Asif Ali Zardari (centre), husband of deposed Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto is greeted by a supporter at a police station in Karachi after being formally rearrested in a murder conspiracy case (Reuter photo)

Pakistan rearrests Bhutto's husband in murder case

KARACHI, Pakistan (R) — Pakistani police rearrested ousted Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's husband Asif Ali Zardari on suspicion of involvement in the alleged murder of his wife's brother Murtaza, lawyers said.

The arrest was made by the Criminal Investigation Agency (CIA) just as soon as Mr. Zardari was released from Karachi's Landhi Jail Thursday after a "court had declared his six-week detention illegal, witnesses said."

"Zardari has been arrested by the CIA for involvement in the murder of Murtaza Bhutto," Mr. Zardari's lawyer Farooq Naik told Reuters.

He said the release was delayed until late this evening as authorities prepared to bring fresh charges against Zardari.

Earlier police had said Mr. Zardari's new arrest order

was in connection with the murder of Murtaza Bhutto, who was killed by police firing on Sept. 20 in Karachi.

Mr. Naik said he and other lawyers for Mr. Zardari tried to arrange pre-arrest bail but were not informed by authorities what specific charges were being brought against Mr. Zardari.

Benazir Bhutto and a dozen of her supporters stood for half an hour outside the jail waiting for a chance to meet her husband or greet him on his release, witnesses said.

But she lost patience and left a few hours before Mr. Zardari finally came out, they said.

"Zardari was in high spirits as he came out of the jail," Mr. Naik said.

Witnesses said a smiling Zardari waved victory signs at a small crowd of party activists standing outside the jail as he was driven away in a CIA armoured

car. Mr. Zardari was investigated in his wife's cabinet.

Police Wednesday also arrested Abdullah Shah, former chief minister of Sindh province during Ms. Bhutto's government, on alleged involvement in a land scam.

Mr. Shah was picked up from his residence for interrogation and later put in a lockup, a police official said.

President Farooq Leghari sacked Ms. Bhutto's government on Nov. 5 on disputed charges of corruption and misuse.

Soon afterwards her husband was detained in the city of Lahore under the catch-all maintenance of public order ordinance. He was transferred to a rest house near Islamabad before being sent to Karachi on Nov. 27.

New NATO peace mission in Bosnia formally launched

SARAJEVO (R) — NATO commanders formally launched a new multinational peacekeeping force in Bosnia in a military ceremony Friday in the capital Sarajevo.

Watched by several hundred soldiers from alliance countries, NATO Commander in Europe General George Joulwan presided over a transfer of authority to the 35,000-strong Stabilisation Force (SFOR).

The new force, which will police the Dayton Peace Agreement for 18 months, took over from the Implementation Force (IFOR).

"You are here to keep the peace not to fight a war," Gen. Joulwan told the soldiers in a short speech.

At its height, IFOR had close to 60,000 troops deployed across Bosnia, while SFOR will begin with some 35,000 soldiers though its mission remains essentially the same.

The United States has offered 8,000 troops to the new force which sees the deployment of German combat troops for the first time since World War II.

Over the past year, NATO-led troops have suc-

cessfully enforced military terms of the Dayton Peace Accords, separating Bosnia's rival armies and overseeing storage of heavy weapons.

U.S. officials Thursday said they were considering whether an international police force should be created to capture accused war criminals in Bosnia.

Defence Secretary William Perry said NATO defence ministers believe the force should be created but details on its makeup will have to be decided by individual allies' national security officials.

He confirmed representatives of U.S. agencies involved in Bosnia met at the White House Monday to discuss the issue.

Mr. Perry told reporters NATO defence ministers "believe that it is critically important to long-term peace in Bosnia to bring indicted war criminals to justice."

White House spokesman Mike McCurry confirmed that U.S. officials were discussing how to help the Hague tribunal prosecute indicted war criminals.

"Now there is a discussion

underway," Mr. McCurry said. "There are some ideas on how that could be done."

There will be additional discussions about how to make more effective the effort to bring to prosecution those responsible for war crimes.

Mr. Perry said the NATO defence ministers offered no opinion on whether there should be a civilian police force or a paramilitary one.

He said such details must be worked out by the allies' broader national security agencies.

He would not comment on a New York Times report that the White House Bosnia Group had decided Monday to draw up plans for the force but said "that would be the appropriate body for considering the U.S. support for a police force."

"This is not a military function to put this force together," he said later.

Only seven of nearly 80 people indicted for alleged war crimes have been prosecuted by the Hague tribunal.

Those still free include former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and his former military chief Ratko Mladic.

Bardot denies racism charge in court

PARIS (R) — Brigitte Bardot, cheered by fans and fellow animal lovers, has denied in court that she incited racial hatred by saying that France was being invaded by sheep-slaughtering Muslims.

As the 62-year-old former screen sex symbol took the stand, hundreds of fans outside the courtroom waved signs reading "Brigitte, we love you" and sported "Meat = Murder" buttons.

"I am someone who feels neither hatred nor revenge, but I am rebellious," Bardot, wearing a grey trouser suit and flowers in her dark blond hair, told the court.

In an opinion column in the conservative daily Le Figaro last April, the outspoken actress turned animal rights activist had denounced in strong terms the ritual slaughter of sheep.

"It's barbarous to kill these sheep which are not knocked unconscious before being bled. It's a party for everyone, but for me it's horror. There are fields and fields of sheep with their throats slit," she told the court.

The charges against her, which carry punishment of up to a year in prison and a 300,000-Franc (\$60,000) fine, were brought by the Movement Against Racism

(MRAP), the Human Rights League (LDH) and the League Against Racism and Anti-Semitism (LICRA).

Public prosecutor Marie-Jeanne Viellard asked that the verdict and sentence, due on Jan. 23, be published in the press but did not request a specific punishment.

"It is not the tradition of slaughter that (Bardot) is denouncing, but all Muslim traditions," Ms. Viellard said.

Bardot's husband Bernard D'Ormale, a member of the far right National Front which proposes sending back France's four million mostly North African immigrants, sat beside her holding her hand until she stood up to testify.

During her hour-long testimony, Bardot giggled, bantered with the presiding judge and occasionally drew reporters, lawyers and spectators into laughing along with her.

"There are an enormous number of Muslims in France now, and every family head must slaughter a sheep. Every time a mosque is built, a slaughterhouse should be built as well," she said.

"These people have come to our country but don't apply our laws...I'm just saying out loud what everyone thinks quietly."

S. Korea's cabinet reshuffled

SEOUL (R) — South Korean President Kim Young-Sam reshuffled his scandal-tainted cabinet Friday, introducing new faces to Polish his government's image as it heads into a presidential election year.

A spokesman for the presidential blue house announced a string of new appointments at a number of ministries, including the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy.

Changes at economy-related ministries appear designed to deflect public criticism of government policy amid an economic slowdown caused by plunging exports.

Also changing are the heads of the National Police Administration and National Security Council, underlining Mr. Kim's pre-election law-and-order drive and his efforts to beef up the country's defences against the North Korean threat.

The spokesman said the reshuffle was prompted by the appointment of an ambassador to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which Seoul joined this month. That job will be taken by Koo Bohn-Young, current minister of science and technology.

The OECD appointment allowed Mr. Kim to drop his trade minister, who has been in the hot seat this year as the trade deficit balloons.

It also gave the president a chance to rejuvenate a cabinet rocked by scandals involving two ministers.

Mr. Kim's government has been under a cloud since Defence Minister Lee Yang-Ho was sacked in October.

It was first thought that Mr. Lee was fired to take responsibility for an embarrassing security lapse that allowed a North Korean Shark-class submarine to sail unnoticed onto a South Korean beach in September.

But several days later Mr. Lee was arrested on charges of accepting a 150 million won (\$180,000) kickback from an arms merchant in connection with the purchase of military helicopters from the Daewoo Group.

Mr. Lee was jailed for four years this week.

Last month Health Minister Lee Sung-Ho was forced to quit in a corruption scandal involving his wife. Lee Sung-Ho himself was cleared of any suspicion.

Presidential elections are not due until December next year, but corruption and economic management are certain to be key issues.

President Kim has staked his personal honour on his campaign to clean up South Korean society, and although he cannot stand for a second term in office he is anxious to appoint a successor.

In moves that have appealed to the electorate, Mr. Kim has cracked down on violent leftist student demonstrators and taken a tough line on North Korea following the submarine incursion.

Also changing are the ministers of agriculture and forestry, political affairs, environment, government administration, legislation, and patriots and veteran affairs.

Meanwhile, opposition parties reacted angrily Friday to a damaging group defection from the United Liberal Democratic (ULD) Party, accusing the ruling party of using "dirty politics" to force the four out.

The four, Kangwon province Governor Choi Gak-Kyu, Wonju Mayor Kim Ki-Yul, and two MPs, bolted the conservative opposition ULD Thursday night, leaving gaping holes in the party's regional support base.

The defections of lawmakers Ryu Chong-Su and Hwang Hak-Soo also strengthened the hand of President Kim's ruling New Korea

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Little to hope for

THE WARNING that Jordanian leaders made to Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy on Thursday seems to have fallen on deaf ears. The Jordanian side took pains to express to Mr. Levy that unless all agreements that the Jewish state reached with the Arab parties are faithfully and completely implemented, and Israel's settlement programme is put to an immediate halt, the tide of peace would give way to renewed conflict.

Jordan sought to make the Israeli minister understand why Jordan considers settlement as a threat to the Kingdom. Expanding the settlements may not, as Mr. Levy insist, violate the Oslo accords. But they certainly violate the spirit of Madrid enshrined in the principle of exchanging occupied Arab lands for peace. Jordan supports the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, because when the Palestinian people regain their national rights and an independent state, the notion that Jordan is Palestine will be buried for ever. The Jordan-Israel peace treaty was the strongest expression against that notion.

Whether a deal on Israeli redeployment from Hebron is imminent or not and whether the final status negotiations will start sooner or later will not obscure the fact that the addition of 50,000 settlers to an existing 150,000 will make an equitable and acceptable solution to the Palestinian problem all the more remote.

The U.S. government has worked very hard during the past six years to convince Israel to refrain from taking measures that aim to preempt the final stage of negotiations on the status of the occupied Arab territories. The U.S. used the loan guarantees to Israel a few years ago as a weapon that led Israel to freeze settlement building. Now Washington is at the forefront in criticising the new policies of the right-wing government led by Benjamin Netanyahu.

Whether Israel will heed the Jordanian warning remains to be seen. What is sure right now is that prospects for a real breakthrough on the peace front are not bright. A great deal depends on what Israel will or will not do in the weeks and months ahead. And if Israel continues the trend that its present government introduced in the summer, then there is very little to hope for in the coming year.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Dustour said the past few months witnessed satisfactory developments in Jordan's relations with Iraq and frustrations with regard to the relations with Kuwait. Jordan has obviously changed its stance towards Baghdad although the Kingdom had been calling for the "rehabilitation" of Iraq so that it can rejoin the Arab fold, said Taher Adwan, who stressed that Iraq's internal affairs is not Jordan's business, neither it is the business of the Arab countries to maintain sanctions on Iraq. Such favourable development in relations with Iraq serves first and foremost the Jordanian national and economic interest and it must be emphasised that the sanctions on Baghdad can only serve American interests, he added. In contrast, Jordan's relations with Kuwait have not improved at all despite overtures and indeed the people in Kuwait and in Jordan are split over this relationship, said the writer. He noted that while in Kuwait people are divided over future ties with Jordan, which Kuwait officially accuses of having supported Baghdad in the Gulf crisis, people in Jordan wish to restore normal ties with Kuwait; but the majority believes that this should not be achieved at the expense of the Kingdom's ties with Baghdad. The writer said that despite these developments, Jordan is bound to pursue efforts to improve its relations with all Arab countries.

Reflecting on a meeting in Amman of political parties in the Arab World, Ahmad Mislak, a writer for Al Ra'i, said it would be unfair to place on the shoulders of these parties the task of reforming the political, social, economic and cultural situation in the Arab World. The Arab political parties have been in disarray for decades, largely due to lack of contacts among themselves and the hegemony of Arab regimes on the destiny of these parties and their relations with the Arab masses, said the writer. One cannot expect from the political parties, many of them still fledgling, to bring about reform overnight though they can take the initial steps to achieve that objective, he added. The writer said the main task of these parties is to help Arab regimes to embark on serious efforts towards normalisation among themselves before they can unify their collective action to liberate the occupied Arab territories in Palestine, Syria and Lebanon. He said these parties also have the serious task of overcoming the state of frustration prevailing among their members, as a result of the hegemony Arab regimes exercise on them, before they can play a meaningful role in unifying Arab ranks.

Jordanian Perspective

Unless comprehensive, peace cannot exist in the Mideast

JORDAN HAS been trying hard to put the Middle East peace process back on track not only because of its genuine concern and interest to see calm and stability prevail in the region but also because of the direct dangers a failure of the peace process would pose to the Kingdom's own security. This message was made clear by Information Minister Marwan Muasher in comments he made at a joint press conference with Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy on Thursday.

The comments of both ministers underlined a very clear fact: Jordan and Israel do not see eye to eye at all on the present status of the Middle East peace process, particularly in the context of Israel's policy of expanding settlements in the Palestinian territories. The overall fears remain, however, that the entire peace process is going off-track simply because of the headline policies of the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Most definitely, it is not an issue of concern to Jordan and Israel in a bilateral sense and it is not simply a Jordanian task to convince Israel to accept the just requirements for peace in the Middle East. It is not as if Jordan is trying to convince the Israeli government that it should change its ways simply because Jordan wants things to go its way.

The reality on the ground and the factors at play are crystal clear:

— There cannot be a just, durable and comprehensive peace in the region as long as Israel does not recognise and respect the right of the Palestinian people to set up an

independent state in the territories that Israel is occupying today. As such, continued Israeli expansion of Jewish settlements in the territories is in direct contradiction of the very objective of the peace process.

— The Israeli explanations justifying its policies are, at best, lame. How can we accept that the Netanyahu government is only encouraging "the natural growth" of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza when, in the first place, those settlements are illegal and are built on occupied lands where Israel have no right to set up physical presence?

— The Israeli argument that any arrangement with the Palestinians under the Oslo accords should be based on security for the Jewish settlers in the occupied territories holds no water. The Oslo accords were signed by the government of the state of Israel, and it is the obligation and responsibility of the state of Israel, regardless of the politics of the ruling party, to make its own arrangements for "security" if it seeks to do so. The best way out, based on international legitimacy and U.N. resolutions, is to eliminate the very presence of the settlers in the occupied lands and make room for interim Palestinian self-rule pending the final status negotiations. Can anyone accept that the Palestinians should pay the price for the security of Israelis whose very presence is illegal in Palestinian territories? (Was it the Palestinians who invited Jews to settle in Palestinian territories, for them to be held responsible for the safety of the settlers today?)

The Israeli government should not seek to hide behind flimsy excuses and justifications. The stakes in the game

are too high for such naive arguments and lame excuses.

The writing is clear on the wall: The present movement, or the lack of it, of the peace process is fraught with dangers. Israel is kidding no one but itself if it believes that it could consolidate its gains in the peace process in terms of continuing to deny the Palestinians their legitimate rights.

That is only part of the deal. The other is the real danger that threatens everyone in the region. Israel is gravely mistaken if it expects the Palestinians to remain docile and accept whatever is dished out to them by Israel as the result of the peace process. There cannot be any return to pre-Madrid status quo. If indeed there is such a return, then it would include a revival of the intifada with much more intensity and violence. Israel had better be prepared for that eventuality.

As far as Jordan is concerned, the dangers are multifold. On the one hand, the manifestations of Palestinian discontent with the peace process would not be limited to the Palestinian territories and would definitely spill over to the East Bank. On the other, Israel's refusal to recognise and respect Palestinian rights in the Palestinian territories would only revive the theory of "Jordan is Palestine".

Needless to say, revival of that theory as a result of Israel's intransigence in the peace process would render meaningless one of the essences of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty — mutual commitment to respect each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as the right to live within secure borders and not to undertake any action that would threaten the other's security.

American churches offer a better option for Jerusalem, call for 'shared city for two peoples, three religions'

By Rami G. Khouri

A NUMBER of leading Christian churches and organisations in the United States today (Saturday) published a full-page notice in the New York Times calling for "a shared Jerusalem," providing a "heritage, hope and home of two peoples and three religions." The statement, issued by the Washington-based Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP), was signed by over 600 individuals and organisations.

Many will be writing to their senators asking that they bring up the concept of a shared Jerusalem in the context of Madeleine Albright's Senate confirmation hearing for U.S. Secretary of State. Others are writing letters and op-eds for papers across the United States.

The statement says that "Jerusalem is a sacred city to Jews, Christians and Muslims, the Children of Abraham. All long for Jerusalem to be the city of peace. For most of its history the fate of Jerusalem was determined by war. Now the ancient hope for peace can

become reality through negotiations."

It explicitly challenges the Israeli sole claim to sovereignty in the holy city, noting that: "As Christians committed to working for peace, we support a negotiated solution for Jerusalem that respects the human and political rights of both Palestinians and Israelis, as well as the rights of the three religious communities. We urge Jews, Christians and Muslims to open dialogue on these issues."

It goes on to proclaim that: "Jerusalem at peace cannot belong exclusively to one people, one country or one religion. Jerusalem should be open to all, shared by all — two peoples and three religions."

It concludes by urging the United States government "to call upon negotiators to move beyond exclusivist claims and create a Jerusalem that is a sign of peace and a symbol of reconciliation for all humankind."

Churches for Middle East Peace is the umbrella organisation that helps coordinate the advocacy on Middle

East issues of 16 church organisations having a presence in Washington. CMEP began its work in 1984 out of the conviction that the policy perspectives and long Middle East experience of its member bodies can play a useful role in the public arena. It carries on an ongoing dialogue with the Congress, the administration and the diplomatic community on a variety of issues, including human rights, arms transfers, foreign aid, Israeli settlements and Jerusalem.

The following are some of the churches and groups that signed the statement: American Friends Service Committee, Kara Newell, executive director; Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, Metropolitan Philip (Saliba); Catholic Conference of Major Superiors of Men's Institutes, Very Rev. Joseph LeVesque, CM, President; Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Richard L. Hamm, general minister and president; Church of the Brethren, Rev. Dr. Donald E. Miller, general secretary;

The Episcopal Church, The Most Rev. Edmond L. Browning, presiding Bishop; Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Rev. H. George Anderson, presiding Bishop; Friends Committee on National Legislation, Joe Volk, executive secretary; Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, Fr. Kenneth F. Thesing, MM, superior general; Sister Claudette Laverdiere, MM, president, Central Governing Board; Mennonite Central Committee, Ronald J.R. Mathies, executive director; National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S., The Rev. Dr. Joan Brown Campbell, general secretary; Melvin G. Talbot, San Francisco Area.

Today's statement follows a series of similar appeals in recent years by Christian churches on the status of Jerusalem. In the statement "on the significance of Jerusalem for Christians" released on Sept. 14, 1994, the Patriarchs and heads of the Christian communities in Jerusalem said: "We call upon all parties concerned to comprehend and accept

the nature and deep significance of Jerusalem, City of God. None can appropriate it in exclusivist ways. We invite each party to go beyond exclusivist visions or actions, and without discrimination, to consider the religious and national aspirations of others, in order to give back to Jerusalem its true universal character and to make of the city a holy place of reconciliation for humankind."

In 1995, many U.S. heads of Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant, Episcopal and Historic Peace communions endorsed a March 6 message: "It is our conviction, Mr. President, that a resolution of Jerusalem has the potential for advancing cooperation between the three Abrahamic faiths or sowing the seeds of new religious conflicts between Muslims, Jews and Christians. The future of Jerusalem must not be pre-empted by the actions of any one party. Only a negotiated agreement that respects the human and political rights of Palestinians and Israelis as well as the three religious

communities can lead to a lasting peace. The goal of a warm peace between Israel and its Arab neighbours can only be achieved in the context of a shared city where the interests of all parties are respected."

Churches for Middle East Peace is a joint programme of the Washington offices of the American Baptist Churches, U.S.; American Friends Service Committee; Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); Church of the Brethren; Episcopal Church; Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; Friends Committee on National Legislation; Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers; Mennonite Central Committee; National Council of Churches; Presbyterian Church (USA); Roman Catholic Conference of Major Superiors of Men; Unitarian Universalist Association; United Methodist Church; United Methodist Church. CMEP can be contacted at 110 Maryland Ave, NE, Suite 108, Washington, DC 20002, USA. Tel.: (202) 546-8425, Fax: (202) 543-7532.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Arab political parties' meeting 'reviving the spirit of pan-Arabism'

REVIEWED BY ELIA NASRALLAH

TOPICS COVERED by the local Arabic dailies' last week included the first ever conference by political parties in the Arab World and its impact on the future of inter-Arab relations and joint action. Also given prominence was the Israeli intransigence vis-à-vis the peace process and domestic affairs.

Discussing the status of political parties in the Arab World, a writer for Al Ra'i said the favourable response to Al Mustakbal party's invitation and the gathering of party members from around the Arab World was in itself a major success. Hussein Abu Rumman said that the gathering reflected a tangible improvement in inter-Arab relations and the parties' demand that sanctions on Iraq, Libya and Sudan be terminated demonstrated a unity of stands among these parties and the Arab masses at large.

The writer said that if the Gulf war marked a collapse of the Arab order, the parties' meeting represented an initial step towards reviving the spirit of pan-Arabism.

A writer for Al Dustour demanded that after their first meeting in Amman, the

political parties of the Arab World adopt a programme that would maintain the struggle to end the differences among Arab countries and to open up the borders between them.

Taher Adwan said that the political parties of the Arab World should all become affiliated to the Arab human rights organisation through which they can unify their efforts and pool their resources to free the Arab citizens from fear, persecution and restrictions on the Arab people's movements towards democracy and respect of human rights.

The writer said the Arab masses hope that the political parties will now form a liaison committee that could coordinate their political action in defence of Arab citizens' rights.

The conference of more than 30 political parties from the Arab World was significant as it paves the way for future joint action by their members: their meeting in Amman was a great opportunity to exchange ideas that would help them carry out their future programmes, said to a writer for Al Ra'i.

Tawfiq Abul Rub said that the ideologies and leading members of these parties have no doubt reviewed the current situation in the Arab

World and their own positions with regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict and other issues.

He added that there is no doubt that such a meeting will help them embark on concerted action that would help their nation maintain the struggle for unity and for progress. He said that these parties have a duty to build a strong popular base in their own countries and serve as a guide for the masses on questions of destiny.

Mohammad Kawash, a writer for Al Dustour, said that Jordan was the ideal venue for the political parties' meeting because freedom of speech and democracy are guaranteed in the Kingdom.

These elements, he said, created the proper climate for the conference's success. The meeting served as the first practical step towards charting a programme for popular action that would help the Arab masses attain their objectives, said the writer.

Jordan was ideal for such a meeting because the country maintains strong ties with all Arab states and because democracy has taken root in the country, enabling the party members to speak freely and openly and discuss issues of con-

cern to their people in a free atmosphere, added the writer.

Reflecting on the peace process, a writer for Al Dustour said that all eyes are now turned towards Washington, which is the sponsor of this process, and all Arabs expect the Clinton administration to take a tough stand vis-à-vis Israel's settlement programmes.

Mahmoud Rimawi said that now that all Arab and foreign countries have failed to deter Mr. Netanyahu and his government from pursuing an aggressive policy that threatens the peace process, there can be no alternative but to involve the United States directly in helping to settle this issue and to pressure the Israeli government to respect and honour its peace commitments.

The writer said the Arabs want to witness a genuine commitment from the United States and expect real sponsorship of a free and fair peace process rather than sponsorship of Israel's ploys against the peace process.

Suleh Qallab, a writer for Al Dustour, wondered how long the Clinton administration would remain passive regarding Mr. Netanyahu's disregard

of the peace accords and its requirements.

Until when can Mr. Clinton maintain a weak and shy stand vis-à-vis Mr. Netanyahu's challenge to the peace process, asked the writer. The whole world realises that the United States, the only superpower in the world, can stop Israel and force it to comply with the peace requirements, and everyone realises that Washington holds the key to peace in the Middle East, said the writer.

He added that the peace process, which was initiated by President George Bush through an international conference in Madrid, aimed to achieve a peace which is not to the benefit of the Arabs alone but rather that of the United States, Israel and the rest of the world.

Given the present Israeli government's position towards the peace process, the Middle East now stands on the threshold of a new cycle of violence and conflict, said Munes Razzaz, a writer for Al Ra'i daily.

This situation has arisen from lack of a genuine balance of power between the Arabs and Israel: such balance could force the Israelis to recognise Arab rights, he said. The present Israeli military superiority encourages

Mr. Netanyahu to adopt an aggressive stand, with disregard to the Arab rights and to calls by the Arab Nation for an end to occupation of land belonging to three Arab countries, he added.

The writer said that only when the Arab countries reach military parity with Israel can the Jewish state feel that its security is in real danger and in that case it will either launch war or reach a compromise agreement with the Arabs on maintaining peace.

A writer for Al Dustour demanded that the Social Security Corporation take steps towards the creation of a national health insurance scheme in Jordan.

Mohammad Daoud said that it is high time for this corporation to take this important step for two reasons: the cost of maintaining medical services to the public has become too great a burden for the Ministry of Health to shoulder and the majority of Jordanians are unable to cope with the continuous rise in the cost of medical treatment.

The writer said that a national health insurance scheme in which the private and public sectors can participate remains the only way out of this problem and could help a majority of Jordanians.

Jordanian-Israeli differences remain

(Continued from page 1)

The government is committed to that mandate, he said. Mr. Levy called on Syrian President Hafez Al Assad to restart peace negotiations with his country without preconditions. He said Israel will not agree to Syria's demands before the two countries sit around the negotiating table because there is "no precedent" in history for any country to accept the demands of another before negotiations start.

"I call on President Assad to resume the negotiations so that Syria and Israel can achieve peace, he said.

"We don't want tension, we don't want continuation of verbal violence, we don't want to defeat anybody or force anybody's hand," Mr. Levy told reporters.

The talks between Syria and Israel were stopped in February and tension between the two states has been growing since the election of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in May.

Mr. Levy indirectly criticised Arab countries whose ties with Israel have deteriorated as a result of the stalemate on the Palestinian-Israeli talks.

"It is untenable that every time a difference of opinion or difficulty emerges... these difficulties bring about a deterioration through the region and the creation of an atmosphere of distrust and hostility," Mr. Levy told reporters.

But Dr. Muasher said that the responsibility of bringing back an atmosphere of confidence to the region falls on Israel which must implement its agreements with the Palestinians and prove its commitment to

the peace process through action on the ground.

But despite the difference with Israel, Dr. Muasher said Jordan will continue to work with the Israeli government to help advance the peace process.

Dr. Muasher said the talks Mr. Levy held here were "useful" and Mr. Levy said they were "productive."

Mr. Levy said he was "pleased" to hear about the King's action to help advance the peace process, adding that he stressed in his talks here the good relations between the two countries and the responsibility to work together to overcome the obstacles facing the search for peace in the region.

Before leaving back for Israel on board a military helicopter, Mr. Levy inaugurated the new premises of the Israeli embassy which was built at an estimated cost of \$1 million in the posh district of Al Rabbia in western Amman.

The impression here was that Jordan snubbed Mr. Levy with Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Khalid Madadiah, receiving the Israeli foreign minister at the airport instead of Mr. Kaharita, who is also foreign minister.

The opening ceremony of the embassy was attended by Mr. Madadiah and Jordanian Ambassador to Israel Omar Rifai. Many Jordanians who were invited to the ceremony said they boycotted the opening in protest against Israel's policies.

An informed source said that Jordan had not expected Mr. Levy's visit to reveal any change in the policies of the Israeli government but received him nevertheless as part of its efforts to get the peace process back on track.

Lima crisis deadlocked

(Continued from page 1)

Callao, Canadian Ambassador Anthony Vincent, who was among four hostages released to serve as negotiators, was to meet with MNRT chief Victor Polay on Friday, the Lima daily La Republica reported. The paper said the meeting was among the rebel demands.

Mr. Polay, the principal founder of the rebel movement in the early 1980s, was captured in 1992 and is serving a life sentence at the same base as gunman.

The hostage crisis began Tuesday night when two dozen rebels seized hundreds of guests at a party at the Japanese ambassador's house. They have released nearly 200 hostages, mostly women, but about 375 men still are being held.

The rebels' main demand has been freedom for 300 of their jailed comrades. They also want transportation to a central jungle, a commitment to change the government's free-market economic policy and the payment of an unspecified "war tax."

On Wednesday, they threatened to kill the hostages one by one until the government met their demands, but they let that deadline pass with no deaths and did not repeat the threat Thursday.

In Tokyo, the Japanese government said it was not yet seeking a direct role in negotiations with the guerrillas, but one official expressed some dissatisfaction with Peru's response.

"There is a considerable difference between the views of Japan and Peru," government spokesman Seiroku Kajiyama was quoted as saying by the Jiji news agency Friday. He did not elaborate.

Mr. Fujimori said Thursday he had assured several heads of state, including President Clinton, that his main goals were to end the crisis and "preserve the

health and life" of the hostages.

Letters were sent to the leaders of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, South Korea, Paraguay, Uruguay, Canada, Spain and the United States — countries with diplomats in the compound, hostages are from at least 28 countries.

The United States advised against making concessions to terrorists, while Japan cautioned against any risky attempt to rescue the hostages — who include 17 Japanese diplomats and more than 40 Japanese businessmen.

The New York Times reported Friday that Peru failed to act on warnings — received in seized documents, intelligence from informants and previous attacks — that rebels were planning a raid similar to that on the Japanese ambassador's home.

Government security forces, who have made great strides in wiping out terrorism, chose to devote their scarce resources to fighting drug trafficking and a lingering border war with Ecuador, the Times said.

Gaston Barria, mayor of the upper-class San Isidro district where the ambassador's home is located, admitted that police vigilance was down during the party. He said only about 15 agents were guarding the compound as hundreds of diplomats and guests filed in for the party.

That was disputed by Japanese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hiroshi Hashimoto, who said in Tokyo on Friday that Japan had requested 20 extra security officers for the party and Peru had provided them.

Hashimoto also announced that Japan was stepping up security at some of its embassies worldwide because of the attack, but did not give further details.

ICET meeting concludes

(Continued from page 1)

counterpart Belmi Datta Haji Abdul Aziz Umar, also provides for the Jordanian government to offer financial assistance to other Islamic students at the kingdom's universities, especially in the faculties that teach Arabic, Islamic religion, nursing and technology.

The memorandum stipulates that the two sides will conduct research programmes and exchange expertise

in education and educational programmes. Speaking at the signing ceremony Dr Enour said that the agreement was designed to boost cultural cooperation between Jordan and the Sultanate of Brunei.

Mr Umar said that the memorandum would foster bilateral ties and enable his country to benefit from Jordanian expertise in education, adding that Brunei seeks to establish strong links with Jordan in various spheres.

Netanyahu ready to accept demilitarised state

(Continued from page 1)

of land of Israel over which Israel cannot be sovereign," Mr. Bar-Ilan told the Associated Press.

"You can call it autonomy plus, but obviously the name is not the point," Mr. Bar-Ilan said, referring to a future Palestinian entity.

"The point is what is its character, what are its limitations," he said.

A Palestinian entity next to Israel should not have the full rights of a sovereign state, he said. "It would not have a large army, or any ability to make alliances with radical regimes like Iran and Iraq."

The issue of statehood for the Palestinians is critical and the Arab perception that Israel's new headline government was unwilling to accept such statehood was one of the main reasons behind the current worsening of tensions in the region.

The prime minister recently indicated that he would support a state-like entity for the Palestinians similar to a commonwealth like Puerto Rico or a state with shared sovereignty like Andorra.

Mr. Bar-Ilan said that Mr. Netanyahu's policy was similar to that of former Prime Minister Shimon Peres, who had propagated the idea of a federation between a Palestinian entity and Jordan.

However, Mr. Peres' Labour Party had dropped its official opposition to a Palestinian state, while Mr. Netanyahu's Likud Party insists on restricting Palestinian sovereignty.

Mr. Bar-Ilan also said that Israel had no plans to expand Jewish settlements territorially but could triple the number of Jewish settlers living among two million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

There are presently 145,000 Israelis living in settlements which constitute only four per cent of the West Bank territory, Mr. Bar-Ilan said.

Mr. Netanyahu has been criticised for making conflicting statements in an effort to please both his right-wing constituents and the Clinton administration. Only last week, his cabinet decided to approve tax breaks and subsidies for West Bank settlements.

Mr. Arafat said, meanwhile, he saw nothing to suggest that agreement was possible with the Israeli government on Hebron.

"There's no sign of hope that in the future a solution will be reached that satisfies the Palestinian side, especially in view of the Israeli government's intransigence," he told reporters on arrival at Cairo airport.

Mr. Arafat, on his way home from a visit to Europe, said he would bring Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on his tour.

"I will listen to his advice, especially as the negotiations are paralysed now, because Israel has not implemented any of the articles of previous agreements," he added.

He complained again that Israel was confiscating Palestinian land, building settlements and arresting Palestinians.

Egypt's Middle East News Agency reported Mr. Arafat and President Mubarak discussed the stalled peace talks.

They met at Mr. Mubarak's residence in the Cairo suburb of Heliopolis.

Journalists were not allowed to cover the meeting and Mr. Arafat left for home in Gaza immediately after the talks.

Negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians have faltered amid Israeli delays in carrying out a promised troop pullout from Hebron, the last major West Bank city still under Israeli rule.

Israel, meanwhile, welcomed a new U.S. initiative to break the deadlock in peace negotiations.

U.S. officials said Mr. Ross would return to Israel Saturday in a new bid to mediate an agreement on Israel's long-overdue troop withdrawal from Hebron.

"We welcome his trip and we welcome the continued U.S. efforts to facilitate the negotiations," which have dragged on for three months, said Israeli government spokesman Moshe Vogel.

But Mr. Arafat, on his return to Gaza City, was more wary in the light of U.S. statements indirectly blaming the Palestinians for the impasse on Hebron.

"The most important thing is that Ross has to be accurate, an accurate mediator, and not to be biased to the side of Israel," he told reporters.

Earlier Friday in Cairo, Mr. Arafat warned, "if the Israeli government stays intransigent, there will be no hope of reaching a solution that is satisfactory for the Palestinians and capable of establishing peace in the region."

In announcing the new Ross mission, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said the United States "have been concerned about the situation and feel it is time for the

parties to come to agreement on Hebron."

But in an unusually blunt message to the negotiators, he said "the Israelis have made some moves in connection with Hebron. It is time for the Palestinians, Chairman Arafat, to respond to those moves, to reciprocate those moves."

Palestinian negotiator Hassan Astour was also irritated by Mr. Christopher's remark, saying he did not expect a serious U.S. effort to break the deadlock on Hebron.

"The comments that Israel has made concessions and the Palestinians are stalling the negotiations do not augur well," he said.

"This shows that the United States is not serious in its efforts to unblock the negotiations," he said, because Washington was encouraging Mr. Netanyahu to stick to his

hardline.

"The U.S. administration knows full well that the main issue is respect for the autonomy of the Palestinians. The Israeli demands are incompatible with the autonomy already concluded," Mr. Astour said.

But Mr. Vogel welcomed Mr. Christopher's assessment, insisting that "regarding Hebron, it's more or less completed. We believe the Palestinians have been dragging their feet to try to portray the Netanyahu government as very rigid and inflexible... In our opinion the opposite is the truth."

"There are a few minor outstanding issues. It can be wrapped up in a few days. The negotiation on a redeployment itself is finished," he told AFP.

Arab parties adopt stand against normalisation

(Continued from page 12)

The conference considers the holding of an exhibition for Israeli industrial products in any Arab country is dangerous to the Arab economy.

The conference hails the Egyptian stand in confronting normalisation of relations with Israel.

The conference hails the Syrian and Lebanese positions in standing up to the "Zionist aggression."

The conference hails the Iraqi position and steadfastness towards the "unjust American aggression" and calls for lifting the embargo on Iraq totally and unconditionally.

Democracy and human rights

Participants expressed their concern over human rights and public freedoms as well as over the relationship between the regime and the people in more than one Arab country.

The international declaration for human rights should be incorporated in Arab countries' laws.

Prisoners of conscience should be freed and political arrests should be condemned.

Arab political parties should upgrade their performance and adopt democratic means in their actions.

Economy

The conference announces its rejection for normalisation of ties with Israel and calls for reviving joint Arab projects.

The conference calls on the concerned authorities for setting up Arab trade organisation, upgrading the performance of the Arab Monetary Fund, and opening up for world economies within an Arab framework.

Culture

The conference calls for efforts to confront the "Zionist cultural invasion" and boycotting Israel at all levels.

The conference calls for respect for the freedom of press.

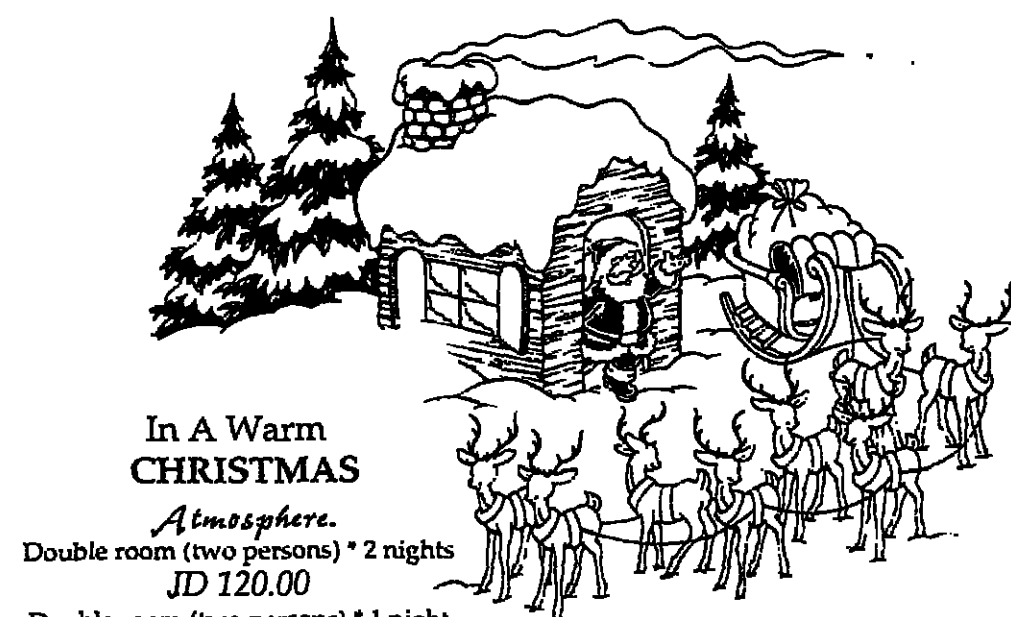
The conference calls for enhancing the relationship between the intellectual and the policy-maker.

fight for freedom of the press in all Arab countries.

Participants also agreed to meet regularly. An Amman-based general secretariat was established for the purpose. The secretariat will also coordinate efforts among all Arab political parties and prepare a code of honour that governs the work of Arab political parties.

Suleiman Arar, president of Al Mustaqbal party which hosted the conference, was elected as the president.

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Iraqi says on television he spied for CIA

(Continued from page 1)

Iraq's media charged last month that Iraqi Kurds working for international charities in northern Iraq were really CIA agents.

Several reports from the United States also have said that the CIA had agents in northern Iraq working with opposition groups that aimed to overthrow President Saddam.

The United States recently evacuated several thousand Kurds and other minorities from

Iraq for possible asylum in America to protect them from reprisals by Iraqi security forces. Among these were people working for international aid agencies.

The announcement about a new spy ring came eight days after President Saddam's eldest son, Uday, survived an assassination attempt in the heart of Baghdad.

Iranian denial

An Iranian official denied in remarks pub-

lished on Thursday that Tehran played any part in the assassination attempt against Uday, as he has appeared to suggest.

"The least that can be said about this (assassination) is that it is baseless," Kuwait's Al Rai Al Aam daily quoted Mahmoud Mohammadi, an Iranian foreign ministry spokesman, as saying.

"We have no interest in assassinating Uday or any other official in Baghdad," he said.

Uday appeared on Iraqi TV on Friday for the second time since the attack.

Rao quits

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Rao's political future was put in doubt when the Congress Party was routed in general elections earlier this year.

His alleged involvement in a series of corruption scandals added to his problems, especially after Mr. Kesari started a drive to clean up the party's image and began wooing back former Congress members who had left the party during Mr. Rao's leadership.

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Palestinians abroad wary of investment in West Bank and Gaza Strip

CAIRO (AFP) — Wealthy Palestinians living abroad are steering clear of major investments in their homeland to build a future state, opting for a "wait-and-see" attitude toward the troubled peace process, a study shows.

"They are adopting a wait-and-see attitude linked to the future of the peace process," said French-Palestinian sociologist Sari Hanafi, who carried out the study for the French research centre CEDEJ in Cairo.

"The size of their fortune and their cash possibilities do not seem to have any influence over investment decisions," Mr. Hanafi said, adding that funds are mostly channelled through investment firms rather than individually.

Mr. Hanafi interviewed 231 Palestinian businessmen in the United States, Canada, Syria, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Lebanon and Britain from 1994 to 1996.

"Investments pledged individually or collectively by Palestinian businessmen from the diaspora are modest compared to the wealth of the Palestinian middle class," Mr. Hanafi said.

The New York-based financial expert Zahi Khouri estimates at \$300 million the amount of Palestinian investments since the September 1993 Declaration of Principles on self-rule for the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"Their views on autonomy depend first of all on when they left the homeland and the attitude of their host country," Mr. Hanafi said.

Palestinian businessmen in Syria are suspicious of the peace process because they belong to families which fled Palestine in 1948 and whose right to return has yet to be addressed.

Syria's hostility toward the autonomy accords signed by the PLO and Israel has also had its

impact.

But in Egypt, two-thirds of Palestinian businessmen interviewed by Mr. Hanafi said they were in favour of investing in Palestine because most of them come from Gaza, where autonomy has already taken root.

In the United States, 77 per cent support the autonomy accords because most of them are from self-ruled areas such as Ramallah on the West Bank, and 60 per cent in Canada, according to the study.

The expatriates in Canada are mostly from communities which now lie inside Israel and fled their homes in 1948, when the Jewish state was set up.

"There is a general tendency not to make individual investments, but the closer the link with the autonomous territories, the larger the investment participation," Mr. Hanafi said.

He noted that in Canada there were no investment projects while there were

three from the United States, seven from the United Arab Emirates and 19 from Egypt, where links with the autonomous regions are greater.

But few projects are "productive," he said, adding that funding went mostly toward construction projects because longer-term investments in trade and industry are complicated by Israeli obstacles.

"Faced with an uncertain peace, the businessmen opt for a less-risky strategy towards the reconstruction of the Palestinian territories and deal more with investment firms," Mr. Hanafi said.

The most important is the Palestinian Development and Investment Corporation (PADICO), which was set up in October 1993 by 140 Palestinian businessmen from the territories and the diaspora with a capital of \$200 million.

Around 700 business-

men participated in the capital of PADICO, which aims to invest in large-scale projects rather than quick-profit ventures.

PADICO is financing the construction of an industrial zone, a popular housing zone and a hotel complex in the Gaza Strip as well as a telecommunications firm and a stock exchange in Nablus on the West Bank.

"To encourage businessmen to invest, the Palestinian authority must guarantee political and economic autonomy in the territories and a democratic system to ensure stability," Mr. Hanafi said.

Kuwait plans tax cut to attract foreign funds

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait has prepared a bill to almost halve taxes on foreign firms operating in the Arab Gulf state to attract investments.

Finance Minister Nasser Al Rodhan told Reuters his ministry had presented the cabinet with a bill to cut the maximum tax bracket on foreign firms to about 30 per cent from a current 55.

"It would be about 30 per cent. That is the ceiling," he said of the proposal which is yet to be reviewed by the government before sending it to parliament for approval.

"It is an important law. We would like to see it passed in the near future," said Sheikh Rodhan. Officials expect parliament to discuss the bill early in 1997.

The minister said foreign investment in state-owned projects could enjoy a relaxed

tax formula. "We will grant desired investments a cut" in tax rates, he added.

No tax is levied on profits by wholly Kuwaiti-owned companies or on Kuwaiti shareholders in joint ventures. Kuwaitis and foreign residents do not pay income tax to the state.

Foreign firms with annual profits of \$1.25 million and above pay the maximum tax of 55 per cent according to a three-decade-old law which diplomats say discourages foreign investments in the oil-rich state and deprives it of technology transfers.

Prior to Iraq's 1990 invasion, Kuwait was a major global investor with more than \$100 billion in foreign holdings which have shrunk to some \$35 billion with the huge 1991 Gulf war costs and reconstruction.

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Don't get involved with bizarre persons today or you can get into real difficulty with them. Later this evening you can meet with close friends and spend a fun time together. So make plans what you want to do.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Avoid anything of a public nature and keep out of a difficult situation. Don't neglect your shopping later this evening or you and your loved ones will find yourself with nothing to eat or wear for many days ahead.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You are interested in new sites and places today. However this is the wrong day for exploration and this action can get you in a great deal of difficulty. Later this evening you can have a wonderful time with your mate.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You and your mate may not agree today, however you know that each is entitled to your own views which should be voiced so that won't be any resentment. Later this evening will be a good time to go out on the town with friends.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Situations arise which could be quite startling today, however use patience and everything will work out well soon. Later this evening make this a time to consult with fellow associates and make a plan of action for your success.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 21) Situations arise today which can cause you to change your plans radically, however accept this philosophical. Later this evening will be a good time to meet with knowledgeable people and discuss your options to complete a project.

LIBRA: (September 22 to October 21) You get a sudden idea for pleasure with friends today, however it is not suitable at all, so forget it until a more beneficial time. Later this evening will be good for consulting a bigwig and present your ideas to him or her.

SCORPIO: (October 22 to November 21) You may be under pressure of some sort today and you may vent your hostility at home, however control yourself and thereby maintain peace in your residence. Later this evening make sure any guest are treated as close friends.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Don't go off on any adventures today and thus avoid any difficulties. Later this evening enjoy intimate friends and you can have a fun and pleasant time with them, so make sure that you treat them with the respect which is deserved.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Plan how to save money at this time instead of spending lavishly. Build your savings so that you will have extra funds for when there are lean times or when you find yourself strapped for cash in the days ahead.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Be careful today you do not lose your temper or you could get into quite a difficulty. Be kind and gentle towards your loved ones and you will gain the respect and admiration of them in many ways which cannot truly be counted.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You want to get rid of a nagging situation today by using force, however this is not advisable since any hostilities could be misinterpreted as a desire to begin a confrontation. Later this evening will be good to go out on the town.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon.

Riyadh expects 6% growth, lower deficit

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia expects its economy to grow by six per cent this year and the gap between state spending and revenue to narrow and possibly reach a balance by 1999 after 13 years of deficits, the central bank governor told King Fahd.

Hamad Saud Al Sayyari said strong oil prices this year will help the world's largest oil producer and exporter move closer towards its goals of a balanced budget and diversified economy.

"It is expected the economy will this year see better performance...achieving estimated gross domestic

product (GDP) growth of around six per cent" up from 4.3 per cent in 1995, he told King Fahd after presenting the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency's 1995 report.

Mr. Sayyari said the 1995 deficit to GDP ratio was estimated at 6.0 per cent down from 1994's 8.0 per cent and 1993's 11 per cent.

"It is also expected that the ratio will decrease further this year...We have hope the deficit will be totally eliminated by the year 1998-99," he added.

Mr. Sayyari attributed the improved outlook to the government's tight fiscal policy, "the rise in (the

value) of oil products and the vigour shown by the private sector."

He did not give a figure for oil revenue so far this year.

Saudi Arabia's forecast \$40 billion 1996 budget assumed a price of \$14 for every one of the eight million barrels of crude oil it produces. But the average price this year has risen to close to \$18.50, giving it more than \$10 billion extra to deal with a forecast \$4.9 billion 1996 budget deficit.

Economists said some of the extra cash was apparently going to help boost foreign reserves. But it was not clear how much would be used towards the budget.

They expected foreign reserves to rise to \$11.8 billion by the end of the year from \$10 billion at end-June 1996 and \$8.6 billion at the end of last year.

Analysts said Mr. Sayyari's speech reflected the more positive economic mood in the kingdom this year.

"There is a feeling the 1990s crisis is behind them and at the same time a realisation they have to press on with economic reform because of the vulnerability of oil prices," one said.

Mr. Sayyari said the balance of payments deficit had narrowed in the past five years to 32.6 billion riyals (\$8.7 billion) in 1995 from 103.5 billion in 1991. "We expect the balance of payments to improve further and might be balanced this year."

Mr. Sayyari said inflation was steady. "From the start of the year and until August the figure for cost of living rose by less than one per cent which conforms with the last 10 years."

He said it was "important to continue rationalising public spending and give the private sector all the encouragement it needs," not only to diversify the economy but also to deal with a growing number of Saudis seeking jobs.

The Saudi 1995-2000 economic plan talks of a bigger private sector role, diversification and finding jobs for its citizens. But economists say the goals are long-term and slow processes.

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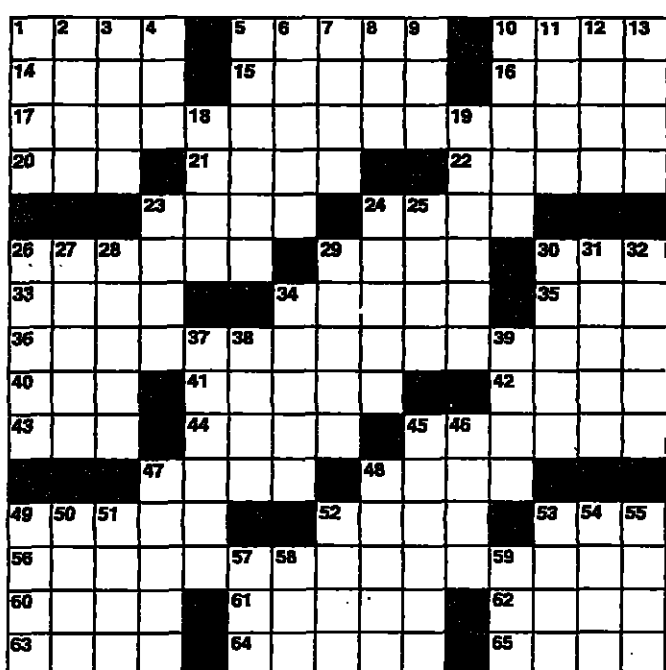
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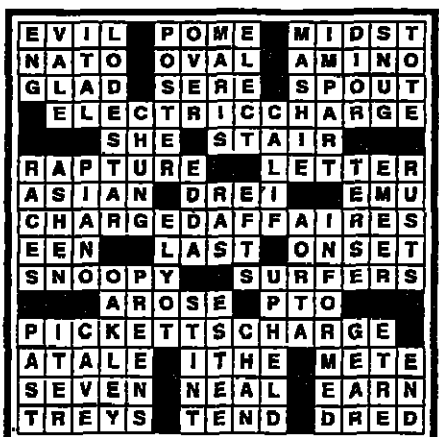
THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Sound of amazement
- 5 Enlarges
- 10 Cut
- 14 — ben Adhem (Hunt hero)
- 15 Raptor
- 16 Passageway
- 17 Morning eye opener?
- 20 Hang out on the line
- 21 Desert sight
- 22 More proficient
- 23 Ophidian sound
- 24 Atlas items
- 26 — control
- 29 Ballet wear
- 30 Betty dweller
- 33 Remarkable feat
- 34 Sister: Lat.
- 35 Classic by Capek
- 36 Bread spread
- 40 Addition
- 41 Wait patiently
- 42 Kitchen appliance
- 43 Stallone's nickname
- 44 — poly
- 45 Family member
- 47 Feudal worker
- 48 Composer of "Rule Britannia"
- 49 Houston pro
- 52 Secluded area
- 53 Total
- 56 Dinner treat
- 60 Singing brothers
- 61 Home to a condor
- 62 Military letters
- 63 — die
- 64 Part of M.T.M.
- 65 Complaint



12/16/96



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DOWN

- 1 Foolish
- 2 Dugout
- 3 Fly high
- 4 Tent type
- 5 Trash
- 6 Merits
- 7 Malarial symptom
- 8 1,051
- 9 Coterie
- 10 Bridge suit
- 11 Shore bird
- 12 Story starter
- 13 Equal
- 18 Blue-pencil
- 19 River to the Amazon
- 23 Comucopia
- 24 Auk
- 25 Source of power
- 26 Crosses
- 27 Sign up: var.
- 28 Full of substance
- 29 Sycophant
- 30 Indian warrior
- 31 Poet Wylan Hugh —
- 32 Eng. river
- 34 Word from a photographer
- 37 Star of "Mrs. Miniver"
- 38 Dark, to a poet
- 39 Learning
- 45 Give priority to
- 46 Part of A.D.
- 47 Eaten away
- 48 Michael Caine role
- 49 Oh, dear me!
- 50 16-wheeler
- 51 Feds
- 52 Friday, e.g.
- 53 Church section
- 54 Have a meal
- 55 Unheeding
- 57 Nip or nap start
- 58 — there!
- 59 Essence

REUTERS

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The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NEG	FRF
US Dollar	1.5538	0.6002	1.3347	114.15	1.3674	1527.00	1.7447	5.2542	
DE Mark	0.6434	1.0000	0.6558	0.5354	0.7709	0.6138	1.1122		
GB Sterling	1.5562	2.5895	1.0000	2.2243	189.95	2.2474	2544.75	2.9069	8.7561
CHF Franc	0.7492	1.1638	0.4402	1.0000	114.15	1.1425	133.35	1.5300	
JP Yen	0.0068	1.5598	0.5251	1.1601	1.0000	1.3674	13.36	152.64	4.5939
CAD Dollar	0.7315	1.1408	0.4394	0.5354	0.7709	1.0000	1.1270	1.2207	3.6585
IT Lira	0.0007	1.0164	0.3920	0.0873	1339.58	0.8944	11.40	3.4331	
FR Franc	0.5732	0.8606	0.3437	0.7857	0.6434	0.7642	87.56	3.5100	
	0.1903	0.2958	0.1141	25.4204	21.73	0.2604	33.20	33.2000	

Energy		
Oils	Last	Previous
Brent	24.95	24.40
WTI	25.00	24.40
Bony	24.95	24.40
Crude	24.95	24.40
UL Gas	214.00	208.00

Mid-East Currencies					
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2687	0.4148	0.18004	0.35819	30.4748
AD Dirham	0.2728	0.4233	0.18341	0.36131	31.1071
KW Dinar	3.3372	5.18941	2.0028	4.48331	381.388
BB Dinar	0.3770	0.4227	0.18185	0.35335	30.7727
CY Pound	2.1176	3.2914	1.2705	2.8282	241.884

Metal Prices		
Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz)	368.9	369.4
Platinum (oz)	372.5	373.5
Palladium (oz)	2180	2185
CU (3 Months)	105.5	105.5
Lead (3 Months)	710	711
NI (3 Months)	8740	8770

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)					
Period	-1-	-3-	-6-	-9-	-1-
Cncy	Month	Months	Months	Months	Year
USD	5.81	5.46	5.46	5.53	5.63
DEM	5.14	5.46	5.46	5.53	5.63
JPY	0.12	0.18	0.31	0.36	0.38
DEM	2.19	2.33	2.33	2.33	2.33
FRF	3.25	3.28	3.30	3.30	3.28
CHF	5.83	5.57	5.57	5.57	5.57
ITL	7.21	7.03	6.70	6.53	6.40

Main Equity Indices					
Bourse	Index	Value	Chag	% Chg	High
New York	DOW JONES	6526.89	53.05	0.82	6548.99
London	FT-SE 100	4085.9	34.8	0.85	4100
Paris	CAC 40	3892.46	115.29	3.01	3922.61
Frankfurt	DAX	3855.53	105.53	2.78	3875.02

JORDAN TIMES
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684311-699634

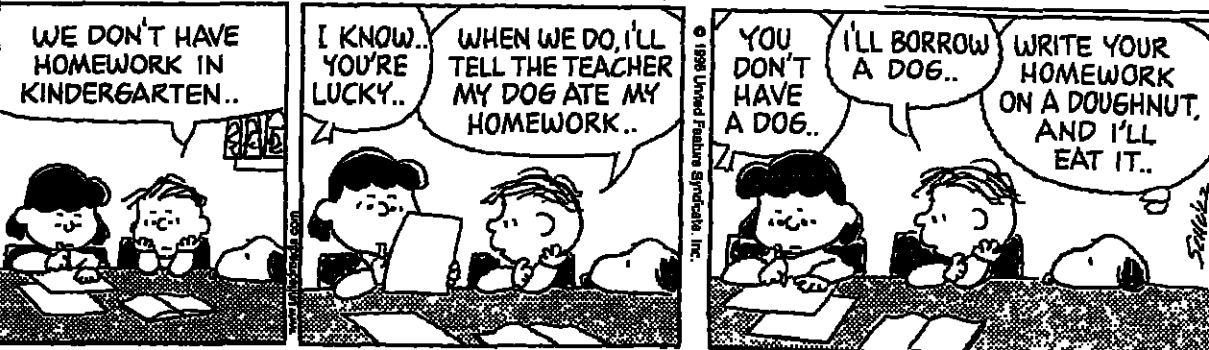
"UNIQUE New Collection,"

"Now, yearly Xmas big sale"
Dajani Jewellers-Amra Hotel Shops.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1996
by Thomas S. Porse, Astrologer, Card Reader, Righter Foundation

RIES: (March 21 to April 19) Don't overdo it today or you will find yourself in a real difficulty. Later this evening, you can meet with friends and spend some time together. **ARIES:** (April 20 to May 20) Avoid a public appearance of a difficult nature. Don't neglect your work later this evening and your loved one will find yourself wanting to eat or wear any days ahead. **TAURUS:** (May 21 to June 20) You are making money, since the long day for exploring this section can be a great deal of fun. This evening you will find yourself with your mate. **GEMINI:** (June 21 to July 20) Situations are a bit quiet today, however, you will work out well. This evening is a time to consider your success. **CANCER:** (July 21 to August 20) Situations are a bit quiet today, however, you will work out well. This evening is a time to consider your success. **LEO:** (August 21 to September 20) Situations are a bit quiet today, however, you will work out well. This evening is a time to consider your success. **VIRGO:** (September 21 to October 20) Situations are a bit quiet today, however, you will work out well. This evening is a time to consider your success. **LIBRA:** (October 21 to November 20) Situations are a bit quiet today, however, you will work out well. This evening is a time to consider your success. **SCORPIO:** (November 21 to December 20) Situations are a bit quiet today, however, you will work out well. This evening is a time to consider your success. **SAGITTARIUS:** (December 21 to January 20) Situations are a bit quiet today, however, you will work out well. This evening is a time to consider your success. **CAPRICORN:** (January 21 to February 20) Situations are a bit quiet today, however, you will work out well. This evening is a time to consider your success. **AQUARIUS:** (February 21 to March 20) Situations are a bit quiet today, however, you will work out well. This evening is a time to consider your success. **PISCES:** (March 21 to April 20) Situations are a bit quiet today, however, you will work out well. This evening is a time to consider your success.

Trading, prices at AFM edge up on hopes of gains from business with Iraq

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Trading and prices edged up at the stock market this week on continued hopes of benefits for local exporters from the oil-for-food reached between Iraq and the United Nations but year-end adjustments depressed the banking sector, brokers said Thursday.

The weekly report of the Amman Financial Market (AFM), said turnover for the week ending Thursday was 11.4 million dinars compared with the previous week's 10.3 million dinars. The report said 4.8 million shares changed hands under 4,360 deals during

the week, with average daily trading at 2.28 million dinars compared with the previous week's 2.06 million dinars. The official AFM share price index based on 60 major companies closed at 153.37 points, up 0.13 points or 0.08 per cent from the week's opening of 153.24 points, the report said. Commercial banks and financial institutions accounted for 6.3 million dinars of the week's trading volume, followed by industrials with 4.1 million, services sector firms with 1.07 million and insurance companies with 10,300 dinars. Sectoral indices showed

industrials gaining 0.97 per cent, service sector firms 0.44 per cent and insurance companies 0.33 per cent. Commercial banks and financial institutions dipped by 0.63 per cent, the AFM report said. Stocks of 80 companies were involved in the week's business, with 39 of them closing with gains, 31 losing and 16 remaining unchanged.

Pearl Consulting, a private sector firm which maintains its own market indicators, said its share price index closed for the week with a gain of 0.29 per cent. Commercial banks and financial institutions slipped by 0.23 per cent, and insurance firms by 0.07 per cent, according to Pearl, while service sector firms gained 0.17 per cent and industrials 0.85 per cent.

A further split-up by Pearl showed commercial banks remaining unchanged, investment houses slipping by 0.93 per cent and Islamic banks losing 1.43 per cent while specialised credit institutions gained 1.45 per cent. In the services sector, energy firms slipped by 0.32 per cent and real estate companies by 2.20 per cent. Tourism companies and hotels gained 0.24 per cent, transport companies by 1.33 per cent and businesses in the education sector gained 1.55 per cent.

Among industrials, mining firms gained 1.74 per cent, chemicals and petroleum companies by 0.3 per cent, supply and consumption sector firms 2.12 per cent, pharmaceuticals 0.07 per cent, engineering companies 2.26 per cent, textiles 0.16 per cent and packing companies 0.22 per cent. Construction companies lost 0.36 per cent.

Brokers said the market continued to ride high on expectations of booming business for local firms in terms of goods and services for Iraq, which started exporting oil for the first time in six years this week. Many Jordanian firms have already concluded major deals or are expecting to secure large orders from Baghdad. "Investors sought to switch holdings to industries and service sector firms seen poised to gain from business with Iraq and hence the dip in the stocks of commercial banks and financial institutions," explained a dealer.

Daily Business

Customs tariffs on cellular phones likely to be cancelled

AS CELLULAR phones have become a very essential service for the investment climate sought by Jordan and as they resolve a main part of the problem in the telephone communication system, the official intention is to take quick remedial action to tackle the high cost of cellular phones due to high customs tariff.

As such, deliberations between the prime minister and the minister of finance are moving towards the elimination of customs tariffs on cellular phones in favour of token fees on the monthly bill. The average JD160 customs tariff on cellular phones made them an easy and favourite item for smuggling. In this regard, a report from the Directorate of Fighting Corruption has showed that three quarters of cellular phones used in the country have come from smuggling.

The government hopes that by cancelling customs tariffs on cellular phones will curb smuggling and will encourage people to use them and that will ultimately optimise government revenue from the communication bills. Furthermore, the measure would facilitate commercial and investment activity which still suffers from the limited telephone network (AJ Aswaaq).

Jordan, France to begin talks soon on debt-equity swap

NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN Jordan and France will begin soon to implement the bilateral agreement signed last June for converting Jordan's debt of 325 million French francs into investments, the French ambassador in Amman said recently in a lecture. According to the ambassador, France initially seeks to convert 10 per cent of the debt into investments in the tourism sector and cement projects. At present, the French cement company is negotiating to buy the government shares in the Jordan Cement Factories Company.

The ambassador said the negotiations on debt will not involve the government debt but specifically will cover the private debt. He added that negotiations were also underway to provide French technical assistance for the water sector in Jordan and noted that France was cooperating with Germany to solve the water problem in the Kingdom (AJ Aswaaq).

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen

Men's Cologne and Aftershave

"I want my wife to think I'm doing my share of housework. Got anything with a lemon-fresh scent?"

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henry Arnold and Mike Argiron

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

Let's give these guys a pass

BLEAC

AGLEE

YORRAM

RAWDIN

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: THEY WERE

(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: YOUNG EMBER MANAGE ADJOIN
Answer: Catching the crook with his flashlight left the cop - BEARING

and insurance firms by 0.07 per cent, according to Pearl, while service sector firms gained 0.17 per cent and industrials 0.85 per cent.															
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In the services sector, energy firms slipped by 0.32 per cent and real estate companies by 2.20 per cent. Tourism companies and hotels gained 0.24 per cent, transport companies by 1.33 per cent and businesses in the education sector															
SERVICES		SECTOR		No		430093	266052	INDEX NUMBER		112.99	CHANGE 1 = 2.44				
3.620	1.230	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	14.7	2.40	105	271362	442171	3.52	3.57	3.41	3.45	-0.04	3.475	4.89	5
3.300	3.000	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	30.6	0.00	38	120857	424219	3.25	3.45	3.25	3.40	-0.15	3.386	271	4
4.000	3.670	ARAB TOURISM CO.	37.4	3.45	34	42749	144715	4.81	4.81	4.75	5.08	-0.33	4.786	252	5
9.100	9.195	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	9.48	0.00	47	26412	236445	2.75	2.75	2.66	2.96	-0.09	2.948	282	1
1.340	1.180	WOOLLEN INDUSTRIES	57.3	2.60	25	4189	7885	1.27	1.25	1.25	1.25	-0.02	1.292	619	4
2.710	1.970	INDUSTRIAL COMMAR. CO.	42.5	0.00	53	12049	36565	2.71	3.24	1.72	3.16	-0.45	3.021	241	5
7.050	6.700	JOR. MORTGAGE BILLS	7.2	3.50	2	1200	2822	2.75	2.75	1.95	3.15	-0.10	3.151	730	1
3.810	3.040	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	20.1	2.44	214	27116	121233	3.68	3.76	2.70	3.15	-0.05	3.151	730	1
4.200	4.150	JOR. CHEMICAL IND.	7.7	4.43	3	1350	4370	6.27	6.22	6.22	6.20	-0.02	6.270	634	2
2.200	2.150	JORDAN DAIRY	13.9	0.00	20	100000	227012	2.26	2.22	2.27	2.27	-0.01	2.270	571	1
1.650	1.570	JOR. PIPES MANFCT.	5.2	7.23	14	2875	8119	2.22	2.48	1.60	2.00	-0.44	1.941	388	1
2.500	2.500	ALUMINUM ROLLING	6.4	12.00	1	400	1020	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	2.500	70	1
1.450	1.410	ROPIA INDUSTRIES	17.1	0.00	5	802	1230	-0.2	1.49	1.60	1.62	-0.02	1.490	381	2
5.200	4.350	DAR ALDINIA OV. INV.	13.5	4.06	38	7150	3184	4.40	5.00	4.80	4.92	-0.03	4.868	320	4
3.550	3.180	ARAB ALUM. IND.	8.7	8.55	25	9690	33690	3.45	3.54	3.45	3.51	-0.06	3.479	162	1
1.690	1.540	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	-	0.00	217	264156	167813	1.62	1.68	1.68	1.68	0.00	1.680	845	1
3.210	1.120	ARAB PAPER COV. TRD.	0.0	8.78	14	3850	4532	1.28	1.19	1.15	1.22	-0.02	1.177	165	4
3.310	1.780	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	10.7	0.00	9	6848	11239	2.35	1.29	1.22	1.23	-0.10	1.271	221	4
1.660	1.540	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	10.7	8.13	242	397218	274250	1.64	1.73	1.62	1.72	-0.08	1.695	1620	1
1.200	1.060	INTERFERING. PESTO. CHEM.	-	0.00	139	68900	50321	1.31	1.31	1.31	1.31	0.00	1.146	675	5
1.910	1.780	"N. ROCHAM. INDUS.	17.4	0.00	32	10242	9306	1.62	1.67	1.67	1.67	0.00	1.621	742	1
2.890	2.450	"N. ROCHAM. INDUS.	74.8	0.00	35	1040	23729	2.04	1.94	2.19	2.19	-0.01	2.085	487	2
3.000	3.430	ALUMINUM CO.	14.7	3.40	6	1740	1718	1.47	2.63	3.47	2.63	-0.10	2.484	125	5
2.610	2.160	NAT. CABLE WIRE. MANF.	16.2	0.00	15	8456	13348	2.47	2.61	2.59	2.66	-0.07	2.495	107	1
INDUSTRIAL		SECTOR		No		290129	173132	INDEX NUMBER		111.12	CHANGE 1 = 1.11				
GRAND TOTAL				No		473422	1067136	INDEX NUMBER		103.93	CHANGE 1 = 3.66				



File picture showing Monica Seles being carried on a stretcher after being stabbed at the Hamburg Open April 30, 1993

Seles fails in damages claim for Hamburg stabbing

HAMBURG, Germany (R) — Tennis star Monica Seles failed on Thursday in a bid to win damages from the German Tennis Federation (DTB) for a knife attack by a spectator which kept her out of the sport for more than two years.

A Hamburg court rejected her claim that the DTB was negligent in security arrangements at the Hamburg Open in April 1993, allowing her attacker to jump from the stands and plunge a kitchen knife into her back.

Lawyers for Seles, who was not in court, had claimed 24.4 million marks (\$15.75 million) for damages and lost earnings from a 27-month layoff after the attack.

"We'll discuss in peace and quiet whether we want to appeal after we receive the judgment in writing," Seles's lawyer Wilhelm Danelzik said.

A spokeswoman for Seles in Los Angeles, Linda Dozoretz, said: "This is obviously another disappointment stemming from the terrible attack on me in 1993."

However she said that since the court's written decision with its reasons would not be released for some weeks, Seles could not comment on specifics.

The court did not publish the full text of its judgment but said in a statement the DTB could not have been expected to provide protection against such a serious attack as nothing similar had happened before.

The 23-year-old American star had charged that the players' bench was closer to the spectators' stand in Hamburg than at other international tournaments, making it easier for Guenter Parche, a lathe operator, to leap at her during a changeover.

But the court said there was no evidence the gap was wider at other events specifically to prevent an attack. It ordered Seles, ranked second in the world, to pay costs.

Danelzik said he was inclined not to accept the verdict but it was up to Seles whether she wanted to pursue the case. He had told her of the ruling by fax but had not yet received a reply.

The DTB welcomed the outcome. "This is a verdict for sport," said Juergen Tietjen, the head of the DTB subsidiary which organised the Hamburg event.

"It ensures direct contact between spectators and players will also be possible at sports events in the future," he added.

"If the verdict had been different we would have had to think about whether we could continue to stage tournaments. Tennis lives

from the directness of the game. We don't want tennis in a cage."

Parche was given a two-year suspended sentence in October 1993 for causing grievous bodily harm. He said his fascination with Steffi Graf drove him to wound Seles — then ranked number one in the world — to help the German regain the top spot. The trial judge ruled he was emotionally retarded and may not have been entirely responsible for his actions.

Seles later appealed for a tougher sentence but failed. She told that hearing in writing that the attack "ruined her life".

Suffering from fear and depression, she postponed her comeback to the international tennis circuit several times and finally returned last year. But she has not taken part in any tournaments in Germany since her return.

Orthodoxi, Ahli clash today for First Division basketball title

By Roufan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The champion of the First Division Basketball Championship will be decided today when Al Orthodoxi play Al Ahli at Amman Sports Palace.

After a series of wins both teams were able to reach the highly awaited match taking into consideration the decades-long rivalry of both teams who have dominated Jordanian basketball for the past 40 years.

Al Orthodoxi were impressive in their first round 83-63 win over Al Ahli in the preliminary round.

Al Ahli's loss ended Al Orthodoxi's 1976-1989 reign to win the championship in 90, 92, 93 and 94, but Al Orthodoxi won last year's title.

After Wednesday's match-

es Al Orthodoxi and Al Ahli are still in the lead with 9 points each in the final stage of the First Division Basketball Championship.

Al Orthodoxi is temporarily leading on score difference after a 71-68 win over Al Jazireh.

Al Orthodoxi played with confidence taking the lead from the beginning depending on Hilal Barakat and Ehab Emsieh leading the score 18-8 in the ninth minute.

The two teams tied for the first time 22-22 in the 14th minute and two minutes later Al Jazireh had the chance to lead the score 28-26.

The second equaliser came in minute 13 of the second half 59-59.

Al Orthodoxi

tried to keep the pressure depending on Barakat who scored a high of 27 points and Emsieh with 12 points.

In the last minutes of the game, Muntaser Abu Taib scored to lead his team. Nasser Bassam ended the match for Al Orthodoxi 71-68.

Meanwhile Al Ahli beat Al Jaleel 85-65 in an easy match to open the way to Saturday's match with Al Orthodoxi.

With a slow start Al Ahli was able to finish the first half 44-35 after putting a lot

of pressure on Al Jazireh's defence.

Al Jaleel suffered lack of organisation in their defence thus enabling Al Ahli to sail to an 85-65 win.

Al Jaleel who will meet Al Jazireh Saturday hope to score their first win. They might, however, have a hard time trying to do that as they face the high morale of Al Jazireh's players.

Schedule of Saturday's matches:
Jazireh-Jaleel 6.15 p.m.
Ahli-Orthodoxi 8:00 p.m.

Standings after Wednesday's matches

Team	P	W	L	SF	SA	Pts
Orthodoxi	2	4	1	376	323	9
Ahli	2	4	1	373	327	9
Jazireh	2	2	3	350	335	7
Jaleel	2	-	5	297	411	5

Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games put back four days

SYDNEY (AFP) — The date of the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games has been officially changed to begin four days later from Oct. 18 to 29, 2000, the Sydney paralympic organising committee said here Friday.

Committee Chief Executive Lois Appleby said in a statement that the date change, from Oct. 14-24, was recommended to the International Committee (IPC) following an intensive evaluation of this year's Atlanta Paralympic Games.

"The transition period between the 1996 Olympic and Paralympic Games was totally inadequate and seriously impacted on the running of the Paralympic

Games," Appleby said.

Appleby said the tight setup period was particularly evident in the village where the organisers had only 48 hours to move from one event to another.

She said the athletes village would now be open seven days before the Paralympic Games opening ceremony in accordance with IPC regulations.

The change of dates also ensures that more finals will be held on the second weekend of the Paralympic Games, which in turn will attract a greater number of spectators and enable the closing ceremony to be held on a Sunday, Appleby said.

The Sydney Olympic Games are scheduled to be held from September 15 to Oct. 1, 2000.

Formula One cars to get 'black-box'

PARIS (AFP) — From the beginning of 1997, Formula One racing cars will be fitted with a "black box" that stores information in the event of an accident, the International Automobile Federation (FIA) announced here on Friday.

The accident data recorder (ADR) has never previously been available and will help design and safety teams avoid tragic accidents like that which caused the death of Brazilian world champion

Ayrton Senna in May 1994 at the San Marino Grand Prix at Imola, Italy.

The device stores information about what happens to a car during and immediately before a crash and is practically indestructible, even under extreme conditions.

"We are confident this advice will help us to obtain an accurate understanding of what happens during accidents. The implications for safety are very encouraging," said FIA President Max Mosley.

Becker to quit Germany after threat to family

BONN (AFP) — German tennis star Boris Becker is set to quit the country following kidnap threats against his three-year-old son Noah and racial abuse against his wife Barbara.

In an interview due for broadcast Sunday with Sat-1 television, Becker, 29, explained his wife and son were under protective 24-hour police surveillance at his Munich home, the Express newspaper reported.

"My son will not go to school in Germany," the Star vowed as he denounced the racism to which his wife, who is black, has been subjected.

"My wife has had to put up with things which I just didn't think were possible in this day and age," said Becker. "Sometimes people

won't even give her the key to our hotel room because they don't believe her when she says she is my wife."

He said he would not tolerate such discrimination. "My preferred country (of residence) would be the United States," said Becker, who returned to Germany two years ago after spending several years in the tax haven of Monaco.

"I am less well-known over there and things are more relaxed there too," said the three-time Wimbledon champion and former world number one.

Becker, fresh from his triumph two weeks ago in the lucrative Grand Slam Cup, also revealed he would probably retire in around three years "when Noah starts school."

Jordan scores 35 to lead Bulls past Hornets

NBA ROUNDUP

CHARLOTTE (R) — Michael Jordan scored 22 of his 35 points in the first half and Scottie Pippen added 19 as the Chicago Bulls coasted to their fifth straight victory, 93-72 over the Charlotte Hornets on Thursday.

Steve Kerr had 10 points and Dennis Rodman grabbed 14 rebounds for the Bulls, whose winning streak follows back-to-back losses. Chicago improved to a league-best 22-3.

"I didn't feel well this morning," Jordan said. "I didn't feel like I could stand up without being nauseous."

After I worked up a sweat, I started to feel better. I'm on the tail end of the virus."

Glen Rice scored 23 points to lead the Hornets. In Houston, Dominique Wilkins scored 24 points and David Robinson added 20 points and nine rebounds to lead the San Antonio Spurs to a 115-101 victory over the Houston Rockets, spoiling the return of Charles Barkley.

Robinson, who has been hampered by back spasms, shot just 4-for-11 free-

throws. But he limited Houston centre Hakeem Olajuwon to nine points. Sean Elliott scored 16 for the Spurs.

Clyde Drexler and Matt Maloney each had 19 for Houston. In Miami, Jeff Hornacek scored five of his 12 points in overtime as the Utah Jazz overcame a seven-point deficit with less than two minutes left in regulation to beat the Miami Heat, 94-87.

Karl Malone scored 35 points and grabbed 16 rebounds to pull within 10 boards of becoming the 11th player in NBA history to have 20,000-points and

10,000 rebounds. Malone has 23,939 points.

Malone also played great defence, limiting P.J. Brown to four points in 37 minutes. Brown refused to credit Malone.

"I have more respect for Dennis Rodman than I do for Karl Malone," Brown said. "He gets away with everything. He does all the dirty things and they let him get away with it."

Malone said opponents would rather the media focus on quotes than performance comparisons.

In Toronto, Damon Stoudamire had 19 points and 12 assists and Doug

Christie added 17 points as the Toronto Raptors posted consecutive victories for just the second time this season with a 96-93 triumph over the Milwaukee Bucks.

Carlos Rogers and Zan Tabak both came off the bench to score 16 points and Popeye Jones grabbed 17 rebounds for the Raptors.

In Los Angeles, Chris Webber and Juwan Howard each scored 25 points and keyed a game-ending 14-5 run as the Washington Bullets snapped the Los Angeles Clippers' three-game winning streak with a 102-93 victory.

Webber also grabbed nine rebounds, while Rod Strickland added 18 points and seven assists for Washington, which won for

the fifth time in six games.

In Vancouver, Chris Gatling scored 25 points and Derek Harper added 22 points and 11 assists as the Dallas Mavericks used a big fourth-quarter surge to continue their dominance over the Vancouver Grizzlies with a 105-98 victory.

Harper started in place of Jason Kidd, who has a sprained neck.

"We scrapped and scrapped all night," said Dallas manager Jim Clemons. "In the end our team caught a little bit of momentum and we were fortunate to win the ballgame."

In Sacramento, Mitch Richmond scored 31 points and Kevin Gamble 21 in a rare start to lead the Sacramento Kings to a 112-105 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Jockey Club relaxes whip guidelines

LONDON (R) — Whip guidelines covering horse racing in Britain have been revised by the sport's disciplinary body, the Jockey Club.

The new guidelines follow a series of whip abuse bans during 1996, notably those of Frankie Dettori in the 2,000 Guineas and the St. Leger. They will give stewards greater discretion.

"I think it is positive and a move in the right direction," National Trainers' Federation President Peter Cundell said on Thursday.

The present procedure, which obliges stewards to launch an inquiry if a jockey uses the whip more than five times in the final stages, disappears under the new guidelines.

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a.m.2 p.m. 674028 after 4 p.m.

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TODAY AT

CINEMA TEL:634144

PHILADELPHIA

PHILADELPHIA "1"

Richard Gere...in

PRIMAL FEAR

PHILADELPHIA "2"

VIRTUOSITY

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL:699238

PLAZA

Sean Conneryin

THE ROCK

(IN DOLBY STEREO

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:45, 11:00

CINEMA TEL:677420

CONCORD

CONCORD "1"

Sharon Stone & Isabelle Adjani...in

DIABOLIQUE

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30

CONCORD "2"

INDEPENDENCE DAY

Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

Amman Theatre & Cinema

TEL: 618274 - 618275

Today presents Zawad Weld Awad

theatre group in the play entitled

Five-Star Government

Starring comedians:

Mahmoud Saimeh

& Hussein Tubishat

Play starts 8:30 p.m.

Nabil & Hisham's Theatre

TEL: 625155

The theatre is closed from

Dec. 15, 1996 until the start

of the Holy Month of

Ramadan in order to prepare

for a new play entitled

"Al Aman Ya Ho"



FRENCHMAN LUC ALPHAND CELEBRATES VICTORY: Frenchman Luc Alphand raises his arms as he celebrates his victory in the men's Val Gardena World Cup Downhill race Friday. Alphand clocked 1:53.10 ahead of second placed Atle Skardal of Norway and third placed Kristian Ghedina of Italy (Reuters photo)

Banned Weah apologises to FIFA for 'moment of craziness'

GENEVA (R) — George Weah has apologised to FIFA for the "moment of craziness" which led to a six-match ban for butting Jorge Costa in a European Champions' League match.

AC Milan striker Weah, named on Thursday in an African squad to face Europe in an all-star match next month, said in a letter to FIFA General Secretary Sepp Blatter that he wanted to "extend his deepest regrets" over the butting incident.

Ponto's Costa suffered a broken nose when he tangled with Weah in the players' tunnel after the match. He claimed Costa provoked him with racist slurs.

Weah, who had won FIFA's fair play award just before the incident, said in his letter to soccer's governing body: "You have given me the greatest honour and because of a moment of craziness through provocation, I have caused you some embarrassment."

He assured FIFA he would behave himself in the future.

Weah is one of 18 players in the all-star squad of 20 who play for European clubs. The European side will not be able to call on Internazionale Milan, Marseille, Barcelona and Real Madrid players because of club commitments.

The match in Lisbon on Jan. 29 is the first between all-star sides representing the two continents.

Squads:

Africa
Goalkeepers: Jacques Songo'o (Deportivo Coruna and Cameroon), Bruwa Abiodun (Shooting Stars and Nigeria).

Defenders: Nouredine Naybet (Deportivo Coruna and Morocco), Taribo West (Auxerre and Nigeria), Uche Okechukwu (Fenerbahce and Nigeria), Mark Fish (Lazio and South

Africa), Frank Amankwaa (Gutersloh and Ghana), Yasser Radwan (Hansa Rostock and Egypt), Babayaro Celestine (Anderlecht and Nigeria).

Midfielders: Sunday Oliseh (Cologne and Nigeria), Moussa Saib (Auxerre and Algeria), Marc-Vivien Foe (Lens and Cameroon), Daniel Amokachi (Besiktas and Nigeria), Abedi Pele (1860 Munich and Ghana), Japhet N'doram (Nantes and Chad), Augustine Okocha (Fenerbahce and Nigeria).

Forwards: George Weah (AC Milan and Liberia), Tijani Babangida (Ajax and Nigeria), Victor Ikpeba (AS Monaco and Nigeria), Finidi George (Betis Seville and Nigeria).

Europe
Goalkeepers: David Seaman (Arsenal and England), Peter Schmeichel (Manchester United and Denmark).

Defenders: Matthias Sammer (Borussia Dortmund and Germany), Ciria Ferrara (Juventus and Italy), Paolo Maldini (AC Milan and Italy), Christian Ziege (Bayern Munich and Germany), Radoslaw Latal (Schalke and Czech Republic), Gary Neville (Manchester United and England).

Midfielders: Didier Deschamps (Juventus and France), Marcel Desailly (AC Milan and France), Pavel Nedved (Lazio and Czech Republic), Ronald De Boer (Ajax and Netherlands), Zvonimir Boban (AC Milan and Croatia), Steve McManaman (Liverpool and England), Alessandro Del Piero (Juventus and Italy), Rui Costa (Fiorentina and Portugal), Andreas Moller (Borussia Dortmund and Germany).

Forwards: Juergen Klinsmann (Bayern Munich and Germany), Alan Boksie (Juventus and Croatia), Joao Pinto (Benfica and Portugal), Alan Shearer (Newcastle and England).

Saudis poised to retrieve crown of Asian football

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Saudi Arabia are poised to return to the summit of Asian football when they play United Arab Emirates in the final of the Asian Cup here on Saturday.

Four years after losing 1-0 to Japan in the final in Hiroshima, the Saudis, who in the past three finals have won the title twice, are determined to reinforce their superiority in the region.

With joint pre-tournament favourites Japan and South Korea crashing out in humiliating fashion in the quarter-finals, Saudi Arabia have ended up facing the weakest of the four semi-finalists.

But Portuguese coach Eduardo Vingada has a major problem — trying to convince the confident Saudi team to take UAE seriously.

The Saudis, by far the most impressive team here, have failed to cash in on their superiority.

In the semi-final against Iran they were outplayed for most of the match and only managed to scrape through

in a penalty shoot-out.

In Yousuf Al-Thunayan, Khalid Al-Muwallid and Khalid Al-Timavi, Vingada has three midfield players who are capable of turning a match.

But Al-Thunayan, whose genius transformed the Saudi team when he came on against China in the quarter-final after his side were trailing 2-0 failed to deliver in the semi-finals against an impressive Iran and was pulled off in the second half.

The 25-year-old Al-Muwallid, who is one of the classiest players in the tournament, has blown hot and cold and failed to stamp his authority on the team.

Al-Timavi has also failed to show any consistency and Vingada must find a way to lift the 'brains' of his team if the Saudis are to take their third Asian Cup.

Another major problem for Vingada is the fact that his opponents are the UAE.

"If we lose against the UAE it is not big deal. We will try to beat them but we

will have no problem if they win," said one Saudi official.

Vingada wanted to meet Japan or another East Asian team in the final. Such a match-off would have automatically motivated his players but playing neighbouring UAE, with no real rivalry between the two countries, there remains a lingering doubt over the Saudi team's commitment.

For the Emirates, the built in desire to win is stronger. Only two weeks ago the country celebrated its silver jubilee and the thought of topping off the celebrations with an Asian Cup win could well decide the outcome.

And the fact that the UAE have never even reached the final before, never mind won the title, gives extra spice to a match that on paper the Saudis should walk.

Rough-house tactics against Kuwait in the semi-final booked UAE's place in the final.

It also lifted their Yugoslav coach Tomislav Ivic to near cult status.

For over ten years Ivic has barely had time to unpack his case as he criss-crossed the world.

Since 1983 Ivic has never spent more than a year with either clubs or international squads under his command.

His journey to the UAE included passing via such top teams as Paris St. Germain, Marseille, Porto, and Benfica. With Porto he lifted the European Super Cup and the Intercontinental Cup.

From the start of the tournament the UAE have struggled to convince but when the final whistle came they had always managed to do just enough to snatch victory.

The Emirates are looking to Ivic to weave his magic once more before he almost certainly grabs his bags and moves on to another post in another country.

If Ivic can conjure up an against-the-odds UAE victory, the country's birthday celebration will be complete.

Saudis abandon 'Brazilian-style'

ABU DHABI (R) — Saudi Arabia's Portuguese coach has taken his side to the final of the Asian Cup with a very new style of football. He calls it the "Saudi-style".

The Saudis have always prided themselves that they play Brazilian-style, basing their game on highly skilled individuals blending well to produce entertaining football.

But coach Eduardo Vingada says he does not want to be restricted to a certain type of game.

"I have them play the Saudi style, why the Brazilian style?" he told Reuters on Thursday.

"The Saudis have a different mentality, different society. I want to take out the best of the good things of these from the players and develop it into their own style on the field, not

the Brazilian, not the Portuguese," Vingada said.

The Saudis reached their fourth Asian Cup final in succession with a 4-3 penalty-shootout win over Iran after a goalless draw in extra time on Wednesday. They take on hosts the United Arab Emirates in the final in Abu Dhabi on Saturday.

Saudi Arabia won the competition in 1984 and 1988. They were beaten by Japan in the 1992 final.

The Saudis have produced some of the finest football of the tournament and with Japan and South Korea knocked out at the quarter-final stage, they are now the clear favourites to win a third title.

The former coach of the Portuguese under-21 and Olympic teams took over the Saudi squad in early November after disappoint-

ing results in a regional competition in October.

His contract covers only the Asian Cup. He said he would discuss his future with Saudi football officials after the competition.

Asked if he would agree to stay on for the World Cup qualifiers starting in March, Vingada said: "If they want me, only one word will be enough."

He wants to build for the future.

"The average age of the squad is 23 or less...and they are improving all the time," Vingada said, adding that some of his players could play in top European clubs.

Playmaker Khalid Al-Muwallid showed real class at the beginning of the tournament but struggled a bit in the knockout stage. Striker Fahad Al Mahalel is a strong finisher who has

four goals to his name in the tournament so far.

Goalkeeper Mohammed Daeyea and defenders Abdullah Zubrom have been rock solid at the back but the player who Vingada is most excited about is defender Hussain Sulaimani.

"He has been amazing for us, and he is only 19. This guy has a bright future," he said.

Saudi Arabia's Asian Cup preparations were rocked when their star player Saeed Al Oweiran — who scored a great individual goal against Belgium in the 1994 World Cup — and two other squad candidates were suspended.

The trio were said to have been found at a party drinking and mixing with women. Both are banned in Saudi Arabia.

Campaign begun to make Stockholmers want Olympic Games

STOCKHOLM, Sweden (AP) — The Swedish capital long ago started its bid to convince the International Olympic Committee (IOC) that Stockholm is the right place for the 2004 Olympics. On Tuesday, it launched a campaign to convince Stockholmers.

"We want to make as many people as possible feel positive about the event," said former Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson, chairman of a new association promoting the Olympic bid to the folks at home.

Stockholm is one of 11 cities seeking the games, all of which have been visited by the games' search committee.

Although the committee has been close-mouthed about any city's prospects, Stockholm — clean, safe and with well-developed public transit — has been seen as a strong contender, especially in the wake of unhappiness with disorder at this year's games in Atlanta.

However, many Stockholm residents are skeptical or outright opposed. They fear the Olympics would overwhelm the city and cause environmental problems.

But at a news conference announcing the formation of his association, Carlsson said he believed the facilities could be constructed and the games held without environmental damage.

The group, which gets its funding from the Swedish Olympic Committee, the city and the Stockholm

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Palestinians, Israelis stage protest against Ras Al Amud plan

Activists demand total scrapping of proposal

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Hundreds of Israelis and Palestinians joined forces Friday to demonstrate against Israeli plans to build a Jewish compound in the middle of a Palestinian neighbourhood in disputed East Jerusalem.

"We will never let this settlement be built," Yossi Sarid, leader of Israel's left-wing Meretz Party, told the crowd of about 500 gathered at the proposed building site in East Jerusalem's Ras Al Amud neighbourhood.

"To build a Jewish neighbourhood in the middle of East Jerusalem is a stupidity, it is a bone in the throat and will destroy relations between Israelis and Palestinians," he said.

The interior ministry in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing government last week gave initial approval for the project to build 132 luxury homes in Ras Al Amud, where 11,000 Palestinians live.

It would be the first time Israel has sought to construct a Jewish quarter inside an existing Arab neighbourhood in East Jerusalem.

Palestinians who claim East Jerusalem for the capital of an independent Palestinian state, warned that if implemented, the Ras Al Amud project would spark a violent popular reaction.

"There's no peace with settlements and no peace without our rights in Jerusalem," Faisal Hussein, the top Palestine official in East Jerusalem, told the crowd as a large force of Israeli police and border guards watched on.

The Ras Al Amud project, coupled with Mr. Netanyahu's decision to provide financial incentives to Jewish settlement in the West Bank, sparked widespread international condemnation, including an unusual personal rebuke of Israel this week from U.S. President Bill Clinton.

Faced with the criticism, Israeli Interior Minister Eli Shalev said earlier this week that no action on the Ras Al Amud project would be taken immediately, although

he reiterated his backing for the project.

Mr. Hussein said the decision to postpone actual building at Ras Al Amud was insufficient.

"World outrage has pushed the Israeli government to freeze the building here at Ras Al Amud, but we want a definitive stop to it and to all settlement building," he said.

Friday's protest was organised by Meretz and the Israeli anti-settlement movement Peace Now and Israeli activists far outnumbered Ras Al Amud residents and other Palestinians.

Galia Golan, a Peace Now leader, warned that "to build a Jewish neighbourhood here is a formula for explosion."

"This is part of a policy of trying to take over East Jerusalem and drive the Palestinians out and it will only lead to violence," she said.

Signs carried by the protesters in Hebrew, English and Arabic included warnings that "Ras Al Amud is a time bomb," and "Ras Al Amud is the next tunnel" — a reference to Mr. Netanyahu's decision in September to open a second entrance to a controversial archaeological tunnel near Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem.

Palestinian protests over the tunnel sparked three days of armed clashes between Israeli troops and Palestinian police which left 86 dead.

Black Muslim leader visits Jerusalem

U.S. black Muslim leader Warithudeen Muhammad visited Jerusalem Friday in a show of support for Palestinian demands for an end to Israeli occupation of Jerusalem and the Palestinian territories.

"We believe your people deserve your own state, your own nation," Mr. Muhammad, son of Nation of Islam founder Elijah Muhammad, told Palestinian political and religious leaders during a meeting in East Jerusalem.

Mr. Muhammad recounted

during the gathering the suffering of black Americans from the days of slavery through his youth in Chicago "where I saw a lot of policemen in our own neighbourhoods."

"The Israeli presence in this sacred land conjures up all those bad memories," said Mr. Muhammad, who also goes by the first name Wallace.

Mr. Muhammad went on to say he had faith in the Democratic administration of U.S. President Bill Clinton to support the Palestinian cause, notably by opposing the new Israeli policy of boosting Jewish settlement in Palestinian areas.

"Our country is very displeased with the incentives being given to settlers, encouraging them to take more land from the Palestinian people," he said, referring to a recent decision by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to grant priority development status to settlements in the West Bank.

Mr. Muhammad said he would meet with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat in Gaza City during his three-day visit, but also hoped to present his views directly to Israeli leaders.

"I will speak very frankly to them," he said. "I'm going to plead with them to withdraw from occupying your land."

Mr. Muhammad held a press conference accompanied by Faisal Hussein, the top Palestinian official in East Jerusalem, and Sheikh Ekrima Al Sabri, the leading cleric at Jerusalem's Al Aqsa Mosque.

He later attended Friday prayers at Al Aqsa.

When Mr. Muhammad's father died in 1975, he was elected leader of the Nation of Islam but rejected its separatist philosophy to return to orthodox Islam. A few years later, Louis Farrakhan broke away to revive the separatist Nation of Islam.

Mr. Muhammad now leads the Chicago-based W.W. Muhammad ministry.

Hariri wraps up U.S. visit with Michigan reception

DEARBORN, Michigan (R) — Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri wrapped up a week-long fund-raising visit to the United States on Thursday with a standing room only reception attended by about 4,600 supporters in Michigan.

Mr. Hariri was in the United States to convince about 30 countries and international institutions to contribute up to \$5 billion to help rebuild Lebanon over the next five years.

Speaking to reporters before the reception at the Hyatt Regency Hotel here, Mr. Hariri reiterated his call for the United States to drop its long-standing ban against U.S. citizens travelling to Lebanon. He noted that 60,000 Americans have visited Lebanon without incident since the end of its civil war in 1991.

"I don't see why the ban remains, because security is assured in the country," he said.

The prime minister, a 52-year-old self-made billionaire, said 12 per cent of Lebanon is occupied and three per cent is adjacent to that occupied territory. "In 85 per cent of Lebanon, life is like any other country," he said.

At a one-day session for the "Friends of Lebanon" earlier this week, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher made no mention of the ban.

Mr. Hariri's visit at the

start of this week came at the same time as a fresh outbreak of violence between Israel and Lebanon. The prime minister was asked at the news conference Thursday if he agreed with some Lebanese media speculation that Israel is contributing to the violence to coincide with his trip.

"I hope it is not, but it seems it is," Mr. Hariri said.

Mr. Hariri defended his government against charges that it spends too much on developing its physical infrastructure and not enough on social programmes. Mr. Hariri said education has regained its pre-war levels, with 35 per cent of students being educated by the government. By 2000, the government hopes that will increase to 85 per cent.

Mr. Hariri also pledged to spend more on housing in the near future. In the last four years, \$800 million has been spent on housing by the government and private sector.

Mr. Hariri urged the approximately 60,000 Lebanese-Americans who live in the Detroit metropolitan area to communicate with their families back home, send them money and press the U.S. Congress for assistance.

He was scheduled to attend a breakfast in Dearborn Friday before returning home.

Carl Sagan dies at 62

WASHINGTON (AFP) — American astronomer Carl Sagan, who died of pneumonia early Friday after a lengthy battle with cancer, acquired global renown for making complex science plain to non-scientists.

Born Nov. 9, 1934, in Brooklyn, New York, Sagan — a long-time professor at Cornell University — was also celebrated for his science-fiction writing and awarded a number of scientific and literary prizes.

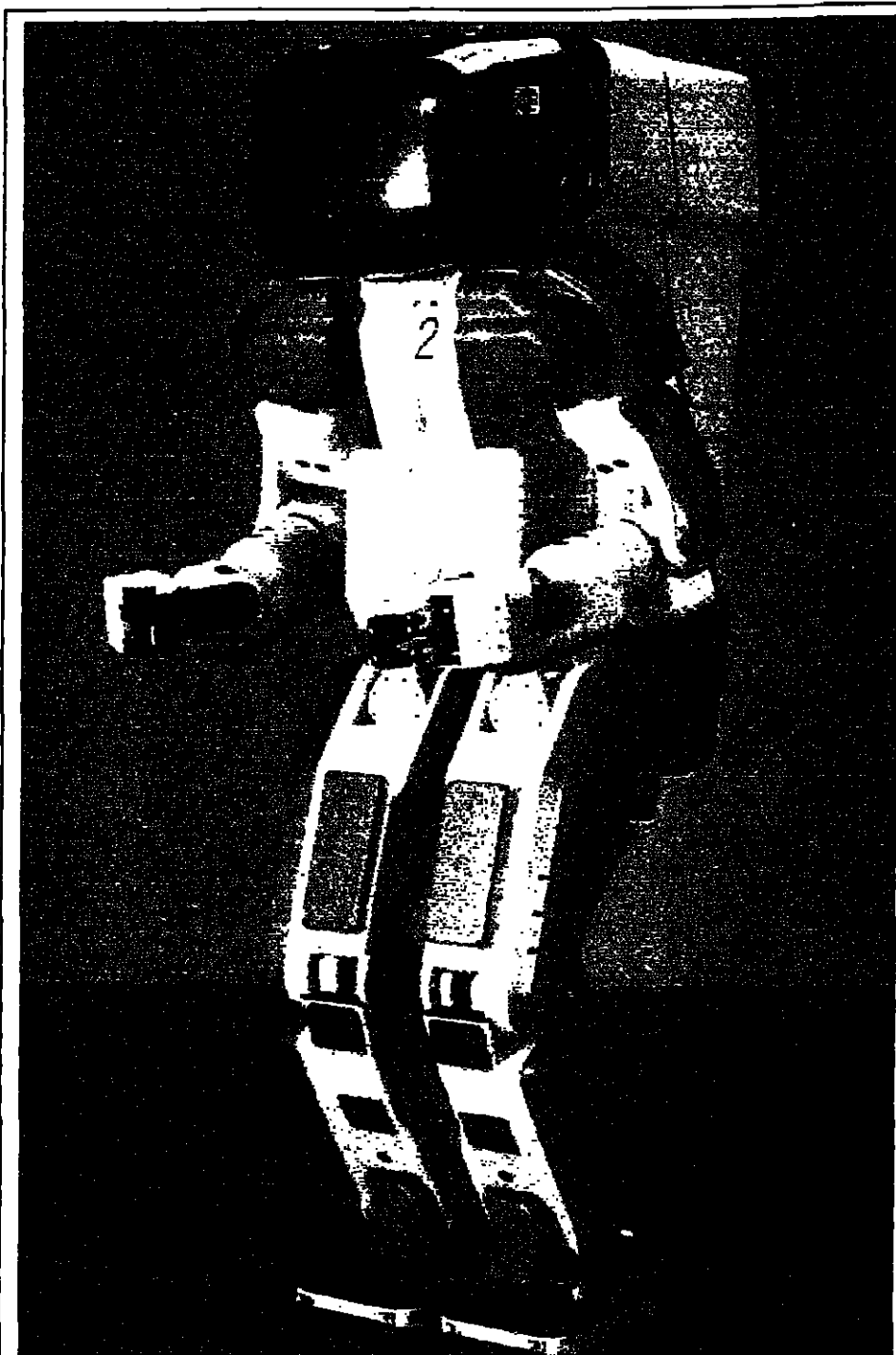
Through his best-selling books and a popular television series on the origins of the universe, "Cosmos," this knowledge-hungry son of Ukrainian immigrants fuelled a surge of popular interest in science and space exploration during the 1960s and 1970s.

He threw himself into research with the energy and obsession of a child, from his early years as a consultant to the National Aeronautics and Space Agency (NASA) to his work as a senior science professor at Cornell.

Sagan discovered science at the age of seven as he scanned an astronomy book at the New York Public Library.

"I felt a sense of vertigo leaping through it... How could these huge bodies hang in that immensity of black vacuum?" he said later in an interview with the New Yorker magazine. "This just blew my mind."

That experience set him to devouring scientific books as well as science fiction by the likes of early science-fiction moguls Jules Verne and H.G. Wells.



'HUMAN' ROBOT: Japanese carmaker Honda displays the world's first "human" robot. Honda announced Friday that it had developed the first human-shaped robot which can move independently and do basic manual tasks. The result of 10 years of research, the battery-powered robot is 180 centimetres tall, weighs 210 kilograms and looks like an astronaut in a space suit. The robot has an autonomous control process and can walk and go up and down stairs or slopes without having to have detailed walking instructions input, Honda said (Reuters photo)

Arab political parties adopt stand against normalisation with Israel

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Sixty Arab political parties have vowed to oppose normalisation of Arab relations with Israel at the cultural, educational, and economic levels and called on Arab leaders to convene a summit to study ways of confronting what they described as Israel's expansionist and aggressive policies.

Final recommendations adopted at the end of a three-day conference of Arab political parties stressed the need to exert political and economic pressure on Israel to "put an end to the Judaisation attempts in Jerusalem and settlement of the Golan Heights, South Lebanon and the occupied Palestinian lands."

They also called for the withdrawal of foreign military forces in the region, American forces in particular, "which have a presence here under the pretext of security."

They urged the revival of the Arab defence pact and

said a joint military force should be built to preserve the security of Arab countries.

Participants criticised the U.S. for continuing the sanctions on Iraq, Libya and Sudan but highly praised France's "relatively independent stand from Washington," especially in its support for Arab rights and Paris' insistence on Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab lands.

The recommendations tackled Arab cooperation and coordination at the political, economic, cultural and educational levels.

Following are the main points in the recommendations:

Politics: — Banning the use of force to solve Arab-Arab disputes.

— Banning Arab countries from imposing an embargo on another country.

— The Arab Nation is "one nation that has been divided by colonisation and the conference aims at

mobilising Arab people to achieve unity by peaceful and democratic means."

— The Arab region and the Mediterranean is a nuclear free zone and Israel's nuclear arsenal should be liquidated and Israel's nuclear plants should be under continuous inspection.

— An Arab plan should be drawn up to provide food security.

— The Arab Nation should uphold to the Arab and Islamic identity and the "option of Italy war should always remain valid."

— The conference called upon Arab leaders to convene in an urgent summit to study ways of confronting Israel's expansionist and aggressive policies and called for the immediate stop of all forms of normalisation of relations with the "Zionist enemy."

— The Arab Boycott Office should be activated to apply the Arab boycott resolutions against the "Zionist enemy."

(Continued on page 7)

PFLP denounces heavy prison terms for Ramallah attackers

RAMALLAH (AFP) — The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) on Friday denounced the "unfair and tyrannical" condemnation by a Palestinian court of three of its militants for killing two Jewish settlers.

The Damascus-based PFLP, a Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) faction opposed to peace agreements with Israel, said in a statement distributed in the occupied territories that it had been "astonished by the supreme speed with which the court was formed and judgement passed on the accused comrades."

The three PFLP militants were tried late Wednesday by a special tribunal in the self-rule enclave of Jericho, only hours after the arrest of the third member of the trio.

The three were convicted of carrying out a drive-by shooting against a settler family on Dec. 11 that killed a mother and her 12-year-old son and wounded several other family members near BET EL settlement outside Ramallah.

Two men charged with opening fire on the settlers were given life sentences at hard labour and the driver of their car 15 years in prison.

The PFLP, headed by George Habash, "calls on all national, democratic and

Islamic forces to put the most extreme pressure on the Palestinian authorities to stop this hasty judgement from being carried out and to stop submitting to Israeli pressures," the statement said.

It also noted that an Israeli farmer who killed a Palestinian worker in southern Israel the day after the bet el attack had not been prosecuted by Israeli authorities.

Some 500 Palestinian opposition militants, including members of the PFLP and the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), held a rally in Ramallah on Thursday to protest the punishment of the bet el attackers.

In Hebron Israeli troops detained five Palestinians after a firebomb was thrown Friday at a Jewish building, witnesses said.

The gasoline-filled bottle ignited near the Bet Hadassa Jewish enclave but caused no injuries or damage, they said.

A dozen settlers from the building attacked cameramen and photographers who came to record the incident, they said.

The army pushed the settlers back but only after several video and still cameras were broken, they said.

No settlers were arrested.

Two-thirds of Israelis unhappy with Netanyahu

TEL AVIV (AFP) — More than two-thirds of Israelis are unhappy with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's style of governing, according to an opinion poll published Friday.

The survey published by the mass circulation Yediot Aharonot showed that 68 per cent of those queried said they were not satisfied with the government's decision-making progress under Mr. Netanyahu, while 30 per cent said they were pleased.

Six months after Mr. Netanyahu took office at the head of a coalition of right-wing and religious parties, 58 per cent of respondents said the prime minister was doing a poor job, compared to 40 per cent who rated his performance good or very good.

Of those who voted for Mr. Netanyahu, 23 per cent said they regretted their choice. Mr. Netanyahu beat incumbent Labour Prime Minister Shimon Peres for the top government post by less than one per cent of votes cast.

The survey was conducted among 504 Israelis and had a margin of error of four per cent.

The pollsters did not offer reasons for the dissatisfaction with Mr. Netanyahu's style of government but in recent months there has been growing criticism from in and out of his administration over a series of controversial decisions.

First among these was his decision to open a second entrance to an archaeological tunnel near Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem, a move which sparked widespread Palestinian protests and clashes between Israeli and Palestinian security forces that left 86 people dead.

Aide challenges Oslo accords

A recently named science adviser to Mr. Netanyahu has bucked his boss to file a high court petition claiming the government's continued implementation of the Oslo peace accords is illegal, the Maariv newspaper reported Friday.

Israel Hanukoglu, a controversial geneticist who claims Palestinians are only recent immigrants to the lands now comprising Israel and the occupied territories, was one of eight scientists who petitioned the court, it said.

In their complaint, the eighth said the Netanyahu government "is violating Israeli law by applying the interim autonomy accords signed with the Palestinians." Maariv said.

The petition, submitted this week, calls on the high court to issue restraining orders prohibiting the government from transferring control over any more land to the Palestinian National Authority or from beginning negotiations on a final status for the territories as called for in the Oslo accords.

Mr. Hanukoglu is a biology and genetics teacher at a West Bank school located in the militant settlement of Ariel.

His appointment earlier this month as Mr. Netanyahu's science advisor sparked widespread condemnation due to the perceived racist nature of his writings concerning the Palestinians.

Mr. Hanukoglu has notably stated that his genetics research has proven that most Palestinians migrated to their current homes from neighbouring Arab countries at the start of the century — well after the first Zionists returned to the area.

COLUMN 8

Balloons are a health hazard

LONDON (R) — Christmas parties can be dangerous if balloons are involved, British doctors warned. Blowing up balloons can damage the lungs, causing air bubbles to spread under the skin throughout the body. In a medical journal, Dr. Stuart Elborn and colleagues at Belfast City hospital described the case of a 24-year-old man hospitalised after inflating about 20 party balloons over one hour. About 48 hours later air bubbles could be felt under the skin over his back and buttocks, and there was a "crunching" sound when he breathed. Antibiotics, painkillers and fluids cleared up the problem after 10 days.

Miss could be Mrs. and miss crown

SYDNEY (AFP) — Perth beauty Sandra Watkins risks losing miss her Miss Universe Australia crown because contest organisers say she may not be a miss at all — in fact she could be a divorced Mrs. Following a call to a local newspaper by a man claiming to be her ex-husband, Watkins, 25, acknowledged she had been married, but the marriage had been annulled and legally is deemed never to have taken place. National Director of Miss Universe Australia, Jim Davies told reporters the former hard-core, who won the contest in Cairns a month ago, has been given until February to prove the annulment or lose the glitzy title to her runner-up.

Wife finds perfect mate has flaw — he's a she

WASHINGTON (R) — A woman who got married after a romance spawned by the Internet found four months into the union her mate had a serious flaw — he was a she. So she sued. Thorne Wesley Jameson Groves told Margaret Anne Hunter "he" had AIDS and wanted to be happily married while he was dying — but avoided physical intimacy in order to protect Hunter. Groves turned out to be a 26-year-old Texan woman, the lawsuit filed in a Virginia circuit court claims. The suit asks for \$575,000 in damages for fraud and misrepresentation. There was no word on who might get the computer in any settlement.

Good news for the stingy — cheaper whisky is safer

LONDON (R) — Don't get offended if friends present you with a bottle of cheap whisky. Dutch researchers suggested on Friday — they probably care for your health. They found that all whiskies they tested contained cancer-causing chemicals, and the more expensive the brand, the more of the chemicals it had adding Scotch malts were the worst offenders. Britain's Scotch Whisky Association immediately leapt to the defence of the dottle. "Quite frankly, we regard this letter as nothing other than an irresponsible piece of sensationalism," spokesman Campbell Evans said.

Cypriot pregnant with 11 babies

NICOSIA (R) — A Cyprus woman is carrying 11 healthy babies after taking fertility drugs, but some will have to be aborted to ensure the others survive, her doctor said. "Medically it would be better if she kept two or three embryos but at the request of the parents she will be left with four," Andreas Patsalides told Reuters. The mother, 23-year-old Zoi Efsthathiou from the western coastal town of Paphos, is nine weeks pregnant. "If they told me there was a way to keep them I would," she said.

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